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G. D. A. Clark.

Fiedler P.110

MEMOIRS OF KAROLINE BAUER.

VOL. I.

SOME PRESS OPINIONS ON THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS WORK.

The Times.

"The two volumes of Karoline Bauer's Memoirs now before us are being, and will continue to be, largely read and eagerly discussed. The reason is that her name became in a mysterious and almost tragic manner connected with those of two men highly esteemed and well remembered in England—Prince Leopold of Coburg, the husband and widower of Princess Charlotte, afterwards first King of the Belgians, and his nephew, Prince Albert's trusty friend and adviser, Baron Stockmar."

Saturday Review.

"She gives a pleasant account of the old King's behaviour to his actors and actresses. He treated the ladies of the theatre with a mixture of old-fashioned gallantry and paternal care, sometimes paying a compliment, patting a pretty cheek, or saying an encouraging word, while he always strictly insisted on discreet conduct, and was anxious to protect their reputations. . . . A well-drawn picture is given of Goethe's friend, old Zelter. At the house of this famous music-master Karoline often met his pupil, Felix Mendelssohn, then sixteen, and a charming dancer, who, she says, might have served as a model for a picture of Benjamin, while Zelter, whose love for him was great, would have made a capital Jacob. The visit of Paganini to Berlin in 1829 was a time of great excitement; and we are told how, 'when his G string wailed,' men wept for mingled sadness and delight. More interesting now than a repetition of the oft-repeated description of the playing, described by Goethe as 'a pillar of fire and cloud,' is the little scene in which the actress touched the heart of the haggard violinist by kissing his sleeping child."

Vanity Fair.

"Karoline Bauer was rather hardly used in her lifetime, but she certainly contrived to take a very exemplary revenge. People who offended her are gibbeted in one of the most fascinating books that have appeared for a long time. Fraulein Bauer was an artist in her way. Nothing essential escaped her eye, and she could describe as well as she could observe. After a brilliant career as an actress, she was persuaded by her cousin, the moral and virtuous Stockmar, to contract a morganatic marriage with Leopold, who afterwards became King of the Belgians. She lived in England when George IV. and his remarkable Court were conducting themselves after their manner, and she collected about as pretty a set of scandals as ever was seen."

Athenæum.

"Nothing, for instance, could be better in its way than her account of Frederick William III. of Prussia, who, although in conduct the most correct of German sovereigns, liked to amuse himself by chatting with pretty actresses and dancers. She tells some interesting anecdotes, too, about the artists and the men of letters whom she knew in Berlin more than half a century ago."

Edinburgh Courant.

"One of the rarest treats ever offered to lovers of biography. Karoline Bauer had a professional life which was worth recording. She was also endowed with the faculty of telling it in a most entertaining way. . . . The most serious romance of her life arose out of her morganatic connection with King Leopold, alleged to have been formed with Baron Stockmar's connivance. The story is told with so much gusto that it is difficult to believe it had been the cause of so much pain to the chief actress in it as she professes."

Scotsman.

"These memoirs will no doubt be widely read. They will appeal to two classes of readers—to those who delight in reminiscences of the stage, and to that still larger class who seize eagerly every opportunity to catch a glimpse of the private life of individuals whose public performances bulk largely in the world's sight."

Daily News.

"Without a word of preface or introduction the author and heroine of the memoirs plunges into the story of her agitated experiences, or at least into the most striking episode of that life, and leads off, if we may be pardoned a musical comparison in such a case, with a tremolo that seizes the reader's nerves, and announces a tremendous overture to the lyrical drama of her life. The virtuous and moral British public, for whose edification these volumes are specially designed, will probably feel less interest in the engagements and successes of Karoline Bauer, the actress, than in her quasi-conjugal relations to the inconsolable widower, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, and in the part in this high comedy assigned to 'Cousin Christian,' in whom the readers of the Life of Prince Consort will perhaps have some difficulty in recognising that austere and incorruptible mentor of Royalty, Baron Stockmar."

Era.

"Her story will be a strange revelation to many, for, in order that her memory may be cleared from the imputations of malice and jealousy, Karoline Bauer has spoken out with little reserve as to the conduct of kings and queens, princes and princesses, who have been prominent figures in the world's history. For readers who delight in tracing the inner life of those who live in Courts and those who rule there the book will be full of interest, and those who enjoy an interesting story of the perils that environ a popular actress will read it with equal pleasure, and to those whose lives are devoted to the stage we may also warmly commend it. . . . Only in her old age did she vindicate herself in the eyes of her friends and the world at large. With a scornful and evidently a truthful pen she pierces some of the shams of royalty and power, and shows the selfish and sensual lives led by many We may say most of these petty German Princes have indulged their vicious tastes out of the pocket of the English taxpayer. But not so much for these revelations as for the facts of her own brave and consistent career do we commend to all lovers of the stage this interesting story of 'A German Actress.'"

(For continuation of Press Notices see Second Vol.)

MEMOIRS

OF

KAROLINE BAUER

1807–1877

From the German.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

1st edition 18

SECOND EDITION.

London:
REMINGTON AND CO., PUBLISHERS,
HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1885.

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THE pen trembles in my hand, for my heart—this old, storm-beaten, tired heart—still must tremble at the thought, that when the eyes of strangers read these lines it—this heart—will have ceased to beat—this hand will rest stiff and cold under the earth! Dust—ashes of my life! This poor human heart, which once bloomed and laughed so full of youthful gaiety, like a flower of spring in the first sunshine, which the young heart bright with joy took for an everlasting one—and which since then has erred and failed so much, suffered and wept!

And of this heart and its demons and its old, long-forgotten, long-dead stories, I will speak here—but must likewise speak of other hearts and *their* demons and *their* old scattered and forgotten stories, as life brought them under my notice—out of which I first

learned to know life, when I myself was still an innocent, stupid child. Of course only much later, when I had myself already tasted from the tree of knowledge and forfeited paradise, all became so frightfully clear to me, as I here relate it; but the terrified looks which the ignorant little girl even then cast into the depths and shallows of the heart, continued their effect during the whole of my after-life, enlightening and consuming.

My career as *artiste* lies open before a sympathizing reader in my "Out of my Stage Life" and "Wanderings of Comedians." If I here nevertheless make some short repetitions of things already related more minutely in those books, it is done only for the sake of a better understanding and a logical connexion.

Here now follows my life as woman. But the life of a woman is her heart, and the life of the heart is love.

(Signed) KAROLINE BAUER.

CHAPTER I.

AVANT-SCÈNE.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE—EARLY LONGING FOR THE STAGE—MOVES WITH HER MOTHER TO KOBURG—THE LANDKAMMERRATH STOCKMAR—CHRISTELCHEN STOCKMAR AND HER ROYAL PLAYMATES—ONLY ONE SUNDAY DRESS EACH—TREATMENT OF GERMAN PRINCESSES IN RUSSIA—MARRIAGE OF CONSTANTINE AND THE PRINCESS JULIANE OF KOBURG—THE BAUER FAMILY—HEINRICH BAUER—MARRIAGE OF PRINCE ALEXANDER OF WÜRTEMBURG AND THE PRINCESS ANTIONETTE OF KOBURG—PRINCE ALEXANDER'S CHARACTER—A DUCAL FUNERAL IN 1800—MARRIAGE OF HEINRICH BAUER AND CHRISTEL STOCKMAR—PRINCESS VICTORIA—DUKE ERNST AND PAULINE PANAM—BARON STOCKMAR AND THE STOCKMAR FAMILY.

"IN the year of our Lord 1807, on the 29th of March, there was born in Heidelberg, and on the 10th of April baptized, Karoline Philippine Auguste Bauer.

"Parents: Herr Heinrich Bauer, lieutenant and adjutant in the Grand-ducal Baden regiment of light dragoons, and Christiane Stockmar of Koburg his spouse.

"Sponsors: Herr Amtmann Karl Wagner and Caroline his spouse; Herr Oberamtmann August Becker of Brunswick, and Herr Major Bauer of Kassel; and by proxy in their absence Charlotte Stockmar, *née* Ramdor of Koburg."

Thus runs my certificate of baptism from the vestry-book of the Protestant church of the Holy Ghost at Heidelberg.

Those absent sponsors are my uncles and aunts. Charlotte Stockmar is my good grandmother, the mother of my mother.

There stood at my cradle a sister, Lottchen, aged five, and two brothers, Karl, aged four, and Louis, two years old. My father had been unable to be present at the birth or baptism of his youngest child, having been encamped with the Baden troops under Marshal Lefèbvre since the beginning of March in front of Danzig, which only surrendered to the French on the 27th of May.

After his return from this campaign my father was transferred to Bruchsal as first lieutenant and adjutant in the second regiment of dragoons (Heimrot), but in the following spring he had to take the field again, to return no more.

After having shortly before been promoted to a captaincy, he fought at Aspern, when an Austrian cannon-ball carried off one of his legs. He died, far from his nearest and dearest, in the parsonage of Breitenlee, on the evening of the 28th of May. I have related more minutely in my "Bühnenleben" ("Stage Life") how his released soul was permitted, in its ardent love and longing, to take leave of his wife and children at home.

I was an orphan without, in the happy innocence of childhood, at all realizing it. The first woe of life went past the gay child without leaving a trace. I had the most loving, the best of mothers, who had now only *one* pleasure to live for—her children. This good, beautiful mother, who at the death of my father was but twenty-seven, I loved boundlessly.

I grew up in the tumult of war wild and boyish, like my wild brothers. For my misfortune I had inherited the impulsive, stormy, hot, passionate heart of my father, in whose veins the fiery blood of the Poniatowskis had once rolled so impetuously and passionately, which caused my mother to shed many an anxious tear notwithstanding their deep-felt, mutual love. I might have been four or five years old when I once stood on the window-sill, fully bent on throwing myself headlong from the second storey down into the street, simply because in some trifle I was not allowed to have my naughty way. My mother just seized me as I was already half over, and then vigorously applied the cane. I roared as if I was being roasted, then affectionately kissed my afflicted mother, and played merrily with my brothers in the street a few minutes later.

This impulsive, easily-consoled, light, light heart proved my misfortune as soon as the whirlwinds of life began to play their wild game with it. Then I stood in need indeed of a storm-proof character, to remain unshaken in the whirl.

When I was seven years old I experienced the first deep conscious woe. My angelic sister Lottchen and my dear grandmother died in March, 1814, the one soon after the other. In the fall of the same year my

mother removed to Karlsruhe to enable her there to give a better education to her children. My easy-going, gay brother Karl, who inwardly and outwardly resembled my father strongly, entered the Grand-ducal academy for the sons of noblemen, to prepare himself for a commission in the army; brother Louis wished to be a merchant; I was to be a governess. I received first-rate instruction, and, I believe, distinguished myself at school, more especially on the harpsichord.

All might have gone well, if there had been no theatre in existence. But since I had first seen the performances in the Grand-ducal court theatre I had only one thought by day, only one dream at night—the theatre. All the abundance of earthly bliss I believed to exist upon those giddy boards. Happy child, who in her innocence did not dream how dangerous those boards may become for a poor, vain, foolish heart, and for a whole ruined human life!

But my pen has outrun events: I must return to the days of childhood.

During the spring of 1821 my mother had come to the Lake of Neuchâtel in order to be in the proximity of her children. She lived with Virginie's mother, the good minister's widow at St. Blaise. From here she wrote to cousin Luise Becker, who had meanwhile married a merchant, Leopold, of Hamburg:—

"Would I could make you feel by word of mouth, dear Luise, how happy I was to see my children again. Now they are grown up and nearly educated. How much delight and tranquillity this thought causes to a mother's heart! I cannot thank God sufficiently that they—for twelve years fatherless—nevertheless

have turned out good and upright, and are a source of great joy to me. How many a pain my heart felt during these years! how many a care has depressed my spirits! and how grateful I may now be to Providence for having rewarded me so richly through my good children! Louis has grown so much during the year I have not seen him, and become so accomplished and clever a man, that I stood before him quite astonished. Lina too is big and stout, and in blooming health. Her nose, which brought her (not inappropriately) the name of 'Nosey' in her childhood, has fortunately stopped its portentous development, so that even her mother may call Linchen a rather pretty, agreeable girl.

"She has employed her time well during the year; she speaks French fluently and with a pleasant accent; she is the first in music of all the boarders, and has also in other respects made good progress. With all that, she is still the same gay, happy soul, and the same simple, natural, pure young mind as formerly; there is nothing constrained or affected in or about her. The music which you gave me for her has given her much joy. She played the pieces at sight. The splendid polonaise and the Hamburg waltz have become great favourites with our dancing youth. I have been received here at this glorious lake with great affection, and the good, courteous Swiss do all in their power to render my sojourn as agreeable as possible. I am nearly every evening in the best society. In fine weather we spend our time in the most beautiful gardens with the most delightful view upon the lake and the Alps; there the young people sing, play upon the guitar, and

indulge in all kinds of pastime; or in unfavourable weather we play at whist indoors, or dance to the accompaniment of the harpsichord. Twice each week I have the pleasure of having Lina and Louis with me.

"When I spoke with Lina about her prospects as governess, and gently and earnestly repeated to her all the reasons in favour of it which you, beloved Luise, and I have often discussed together—then a tear or two, to be sure, did enter her eyes, because she must renounce her idolized stage; but she soon swallowed her tears, and embraced and kissed me tenderly, promising to study here with redoubled application during the last months, in order to make herself of real use in the world. She would fain do a great deal only to cause me and her brothers much joy, and to be one day our support. I am sincerely glad that this girl of fifteen exhibits so earnest and good an intention as well as the courage and strength of resignation; for what pangs it costs her to renounce the stage I perceive in many little incidents. Thus she requested me bashfully to ask Constance von Cofran and our good minister's widow, if she did not do fair justice to the part of the white-haired *curé* in the last comedy, *La Rosière*, by Madame de Genlis. And, remarkably enough, all agreed that the old French *curé* had been quite a wonderful performance for so young a girl."

And so I pursued with zeal and earnestness my object of becoming a learned governess. When I had returned with my mother to Karlsruhe in the autumn I resumed my lessons on the harpsichord with Music-Director Marx, and so early as the follow-

ing winter I played Mozart's concerto in D minor with orchestral accompaniment in the Karlsruhe Museum Society, with so much success that my mother was greatly pressed by everybody to have me trained as a virtuoso on the pianoforte. But where were the means to come from? My poor mother was heavily weighed down at that time by new cares. Her elder half-sister in Eisenach had brought a suit against her, in which she claimed repayment of her paternal fortune of 12,000 thalers which we had inherited from my grandmother. If my mother lost the law-suit we were reduced to beggary, for perhaps her step-sister might even be empowered to seize her widow's pension. What then?

I quite seriously imagined that then nothing would be left to me but to throw myself, in close embrace with my mother, into the Rhine.

Our gloomy condition is best described by a letter of my mother. She wrote on the 8th of May, 1822, to her cousin Luise Leopold in Hamburg:—

"My heart alone can absolve me for having allowed so many weeks to elapse without writing to you. If you knew in what distress I passed this time, you would needs thank me that I did not write to you in such a state of mind. I could only have troubled you, you understand. At last the sun appears to smile on me once more! I yesterday received the legal decision from the court-tribunal; that I have won my case also in the second instance. My step-sister will hardly risk another appeal.

"Meanwhile I have also received the assurance that I shall continue to receive my pension for three

years, although living abroad; and now I await news from you, dear Luise, and your good Leopold, if you do not object to invite Lina and me to come to Hamburg. Shall we not cause you cares and trouble? Examine yourself, my good Luise, count up everything with your Leopold, and let me know openly, how much lodgings, fuel, and board for Lina and me would amount to. Then I shall be able to arrange everything here cheerfully, and in the fall hasten with Lina to join you.

"My Louis is likewise here at present, and I am very much pleased with him. But my trouble to induce him to renounce a mercantile career and seek employment in the service of the State is all in vain. Now should there be no prospect as merchant for him in Hamburg, I will write to my nephew, Christian Stockmar, in London, to ask him to find a good place for Louis there. My nephew is no longer the medical adviser of Prince Leopold of Koburg, but his secretary and friend; he was moreover raised by the King of Saxony to a barony. If Louis were not so fixedly bent upon a mercantile career, how easy it would be for my nephew to make him his secretary, or to procure for him some other post! But I should prefer still if Louis too remained meanwhile in Hamburg. I should regret very much to send him, young as he is, to London. Besides, I know my nephew too little, and am not sure if he would act by Louis as a paternal friend. Louis is now seventeen, very tall and handsome, and it is high time that he should earn his own living. He has cost so much money, and his active mind requires speedy and plentiful occupation if he is to be happy.

"Lina was confirmed at Easter. Although I entered

the church with a thousand cares (owing to my unfortunate law-suit), yet the day was one of the most solemn of my life. Lina was selected by the chief clergyman out of 108 girls, mostly belonging to the first families, to say a prayer before the Lord's Supper. She pronounced it beautifully and touchingly, with deep feeling and the clearest, most affecting, childlike voice. She is still getting lessons in elocution from Professor Aloys. You know her old inclination for the stage. Well, when the law-suit caused me so many cares concerning our future, she again urged me strongly to let her become an actress. But her uncle and godfather, General Bauer in Kassel, did not approve of it. He wrote back: 'A Bauer upon the stage? Rather a farm-servant! Her talent in reading and reciting will be of equal use to her in any other condition of life, especially as governess or music-teacher.' It would be sad indeed if this kind creature, with her pure, generous desire to help her family, should not be happy. But she is quite prepared for arduous duties: life, she says, is only a trial-station for us, and therefore she would continue to be content and preserve her cheerful disposition even in the most difficult situation.

"I had made up my mind already to sell my pension to the state for 8,000 florins, in order to get out of all these messes, but my faithful legal adviser, *Hofgerichtsadvokat* Bayer, would not consent to it, and now I see that he was right. At all events, I have received a permit for three years to live with my pension out of the country."

In another letter, dated June 2nd, 1822, my mother wrote to her cousin:—

"Your kind letter has caused me the liveliest joy! How good you are, both of you, to repeat your invitation for me and Lina to come to Hamburg! I am convinced that by your side I shall recover my contentment and happiness entirely, when once my children are provided for. My heart desires nothing else. The world has no other joys for me. My numerous and bitter trials since my husband's death have made me thirty years older.

"Yesterday I received a letter from my brother John, chief magistrate of Rodach, near Koburg. His eldest son Christian, created Baron by the King of Saxony, has been married to his cousin, Fanny Sommer, ever since last August; she is an only daughter and heiress, expected to receive from 80,000 to 100,000 thalers at the death of her parents. He has lately been travelling through Italy with Prince Leopold, who loves him like a brother, and is now expected on a visit in Koburg. My brother has also invited me and my children to come there and to Rodach. So I am going to see again my beautiful dear home after years of absence. What I specially value is to be able to talk with my nephew Christian about Louis' and Lina's future. He may, if he likes, be of great use to them."

And so we went to our relations in Koburg in September, 1822. This journey was to be decisive for my whole life. In Koburg the first light threads of the golden web were spun which, as years went on, imperceptibly were woven into a fatal net—fatal for the poor, cheerful, innocent little bird.

Down to the end of last century there lived in the pleasant little residence of Koburg the well-to-do

manufacturer and merchant, Ernst Friedrich Stockmar. As he directed the money transactions of the court, he received the title of "Landkammerrath." The court was in perennial financial difficulties, although Duke Franz Josias had succeeded to a rich heritage in shining gold and silver on the death of Prince Heinrich of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, who departed this life in 1758, without leaving an heir. But this splendid windfall turned out just the reverse of a blessing for the Koburg court. It tempted them to live in very great style, accustoming themselves to all kinds of luxuries; and then, one evil day, the whole golden legacy had melted away, leaving nothing behind; and to enable them to continue the previous merry life, the duke, the duchess, the princes and princesses lustily contracted debt upon debt. The "Landkammerrath" Stockmar could tell some pitiful stories about that; particularly under Franz Josias' successor, the Duke Ernst Friedrich and the Duchess Sophie Antoinette, a princess of Brunswick. At that time the debt-burden and financial pressure were so great that, on the distressful cry of the little land fast sinking to ruin, the emperor appointed in Koburg a Commission for the management of the duchy and the redemption of the debt. The little state had an annual revenue of 86,000 thalers—and the duke's debts exceeded a million! And now the duke with his whole family and his household had to manage with 12,000 thalers! Then it was that parsimony reigned supreme in kitchen, cellar, wardrobe, and stable. Johannes von Muller writes of it thus in 1780:—"Ernst Friedrich lived so frugally that he never had more than three courses, rarely many

guests at table, and was also simple in his dress." But the 12,000 did not suffice even for that, and so new debts were contracted on pledge and promises. It was with positive terror at last that the good, loyal "Landkammerrath," Ernst Friedrich Stockmar, used to see the court messenger approaching his beautiful snug house at the market-place in Koburg, or his charming summer residence in the suburbs called the "Glockenberg," carrying something wrapped up under his arm. He knew then that the duke or duchess, or the princes or princesses, were once more in great straits and on the point of borrowing from him "on pledge."

But the faithful subject never accepted a pledge—he thought that too disrespectful towards the august personages. He went on lending most loyally, even without the duke's bond, relying on a prince's word and sense of justice. But he never received a penny of interest, nor even his hard-earned money back again. This experience—this everlasting dread of new demands for money on the part of the duke—turned the old "Landkammerrath" into a nervous hypochondriac during the last years of his life. Nay, from time to time he suffered from real mental derangement. He secluded himself upon the "Glockenberg" almost completely from the world—except always from the ducal court messengers with their silver dishes, golden trinkets and occasional diamonds, who again and again found their way to the old "Landkammerrath" Stockmar.

From a first marriage Ernst Friedrich Stockmar had a son, Johann Ernst Gotthelf, born 1760, and two daughters. Having been early left a widower, the

"Landkammerrath" wooed the beautiful lady-in-waiting of Princess Karoline of Koburg, Charlotte Ramdor, a daughter of the celebrated surgeon in Brunswick, who was once even called to Petersburg to perform an operation on the Empress Catherine II., and received from the Empress a set of brilliants as a gift to his wife. These brilliants were left to my mother, but, during the disastrous time of the French invasion, went the same way as the rest of our silver, gold, and precious stones.

Princess Karoline of Koburg, born 1755, was the daughter of Duke Ernst Friedrich, and through her Brunswick mother had become the rich and highly honoured abbess of the ladies' convent of Gandersheim, once (in the tenth century) famous through the poetess nun Roswitha, who calls herself modestly "the clear-sounding voice of Gandersheim." The Protestant abbesses had seat and vote upon the Rhenish bench of prelates, a considerable court with its own hereditary offices, and a jurisdiction to which even the Kings of Prussia and the Electors of Hanover must needs resort in cases concerning the domain of Dernburg and the estate of Elbingerode.

The exquisite Charlotte Ramdor, highly accomplished, cheerful, witty, amiable, was the favourite of the princess abbess and of the persons around her. In company with the princess she came to the court of Koburg. Well, whether it was gratitude towards the disinterested helper out of so many straits, I cannot tell; enough that Princess Karoline and the Koburg court supported the suit of the stately and generally esteemed "Landkammerrath," though he was already forty, and therefore much older than

Charlotte Ramdor; and so he married the charming but penniless court lady. She became a faithful wife and housekeeper, and a good step-mother. The son was a source of joy to her; but the two daughters turned children of sorrow. The elder had inherited her father's gloomy disposition. She died in an asylum, and her unfortunate son hanged himself in a fit of profound melancholy. The younger step-daughter, ugly within and without, caused her mother, through her tricks and malice, much grief. She became the "unkind" aunt in Eisenach who, by her unjust law-suit, caused my mother and us children so many tears.

Only after seventeen years of marriage could the wife of the "Landkammerrath," Charlotte Stockmar, press a child of her own to her tender bosom—her lovely, merry little "Christel," who understood how to brighten up the gloomy soul of her misanthropic father like a sunbeam.

The old "Landkammerrath" died 1793, when his Christelchen was but ten years old. In his portrait, I, his grandchild, was always struck by his fine air of dignity and his keen eyes. I always fancied that my late grandfather would have been a first-rate "president" in one of Iffland's plays. He had been a class-fellow of Gellert's in the University of Leipzig, and and been on terms of great affection with him.

On the death of the old "Landkammerrath" it was found that he had gradually lent to the ducal family 17,000 thalers, for which he had never received any interest. Neither have my grandmother and her children ever received back a farthing of this sum. But the duke and the court always remained their most gracious protectors.

Christelchen Stockmar became the playmate of the young Princes Ernst, Ferdinand, and Leopold, and of the Princesses Sophie, Antoinette, Juliane, and Victoria, the sons and daughters of the Hereditary Prince Franz, who often came to the "Glockenberg" for musical entertainments, and played in the garden with merry Christelchen at hounds and hare. On such an occasion Princess Antoinette once tore her Sunday dress on a gooseberry shrub, and was distracted for fear of her severe mother, a bigoted Princess of Reuss-Ebersdorf; for each princess possessed only one solitary Sunday dress. But Christelchen Stockmar was equal to the occasion. She quickly fetched her needle and thread, and so cleverly mended the rent in the princess's dress that her mother, the Hereditary Princess, never heard anything about this sad event. Christelchen was fondest of Princess Victoria, on account of her amiability and many talents. After many years the two playmates were to meet again in England. Princess Victoria had become Duchess of Kent and mother of little Princess Victoria, now Queen of England—and Christelchen Stockmar the widow of Captain Bauer and mother to the Countess Karoline Montgomery, whom Prince Leopold of Koburg called his spouse—but to be sure quite secretly, so that England and the English Parliament might not hear of it.

Of the princes, Christelchen liked the eldest, Prince Ernst, best. He was light-hearted, and it is true also of rather too facile disposition; but Albert was gay and frank; whilst the youngest brother, Prince Leopold, was reserved, cool, calculating, appearing almost always as if lost in thought.

In September, 1795, H.I.H. the Hereditary Princess went with her three lovely eldest daughters to Petersburg—for a bride-show. The aged Empress, Katharina, who had previously asked three Princesses of Würtemburg to Berlin, and three Princesses of Darmstadt, and two of Baden to St. Petersburg, in order that her son Paul and her grandson Alexander might choose wives among them, had now ordered up the Princesses of Koburg—that her grandson Constantine, still almost a boy and always a booby, might choose among them. Although it was well known what a sad fate many a German princess had met with in Russia—*e.g.* the unhappy Sophie of Brunswick as spouse of the poor Alexis—the Regent Anna, mother of the murdered Czar, who herself ended her life in pain and misery—the Princess of Darmstadt, murdered in childbed, Paul's first spouse, as well as her successor, the Czarina Maria (a Princess of Würtemburg) tortured for years by gross treatment and cruelty—still the Princesses of Koburg, who were as poor as church mice, could not resist the golden winks of the all-powerful Czarina. And what humiliations were waiting for them in St. Petersburg! Katharina and her whole court made sport of their modest toilette and their shy appearance. The Empress sent her tailors and milliners to make the German princesses presentable at court. And how did Constantine treat these poor creatures! Almost as badly as the recruits that were given him for a pastime, who would occasionally have an eye knocked out by him or an ear torn off. He refused to marry any of these princesses exhibited for his selection. He thought them too coy, too maidenly, too virtuous, and bashful.

So his grandmother, Katharina, chose his bride for him, and in an original way. She stood at the window and saw the princesses alight from the carriage. The first entangled herself in the unwonted court-train, and fell to the ground. The second took a warning example of this, and scrambled out on all fours. The third and youngest, the neat little Juliane, hardly fourteen then, took up her train in both hands, and sprang gracefully to the ground.

"That's she! She is a match for our wild Constantine," said Katharina.

"All right; if it must be so, I will marry the little ape. It dances very prettily!" observed Constantine carelessly.

On the last day of December, the Hereditary Princess arrived again in Koburg with her two rejected daughters—"amidst great demonstrations of joy and the illumination of a part of the town," as we read in an old journal. The marriage of Princess Juliane in St. Petersburg (who on her embracing the orthodox Greek faith had received the name of Anna Feodorowna) was celebrated on the 24th of February at the court of Koburg in great gala by dinner, reception, and supper. Nevertheless it was the most luckless day in the life of the poor victim. The brutal Constantine treated his spouse like a slave. He forgot all propriety and decorum so much that he, in the presence of his coarse officers, claimed condescensions from her, as her master, such as can scarcely even be hinted at. Most deeply humbled as wife, she returned to Koburg soon after the death of Empress Katharina. Since 1802 she lived entirely apart from her husband. As late as 1820, when Constantine concluded a mor-

ganatic marriage with the Polish Countess Grudzinska (then elevated to the rank of Princess Lowicz), his formal divorce, through the Czar Alexander, took place.

The marriage of Princess Antoinette was to be fateful also for her playmate, Christiane Stockmar. On the evening of the 5th of May, 1798, there arrived in Koburg, Major-General Prince Alexander of Würtemburg as a suitor; and in his suit his equerry, Heinrich Bauer, a very handsome young madcap of eighteen years.

The family Bauer comes from Poland and originally bore the name of Poniatowski, a modest branch of the illustrious princely house. About the middle of the last century a Poniatowski emigrated, on account of his Protestant faith, and purchased a small estate near Kassel. Husbanding his own land he now called himself simply "Bauer" (husbandman). Landgrave Friedrich VIII. gave the family a new coat of arms—a husbandman whisking a whip! His son Georg became Keeper of the Privy Purse to Landgrave Friedrich II., and father of three sons. The eldest joined the army and became general, the same who "would rather see his niece, Lina Bauer, a farm-servant than an actress." A son of his became a general in his turn, and, after the French war, Commandant of Strassburg. As such he has visited his cousin Lina upon the Broëlberg near Zurich.

The second son of the old Hessian "Intendant," Georg, became "Kriegsrath" (counsellor of war) and eccentric. In a gloomy misanthropic fit he burned all the Polish family papers!

The third and youngest son was the wild Heinrich.

In him the restless Polish blood was always foaming and boiling indomitably. He was handsome, vigorous, confident of victory as the war-god, proud and bold as a young lion, wanton as a wild foal, generous as a Poniatowski, easy-minded as a cornet: a spoiled favourite of the gods, and of women!

Only the nasty old Landgrave Wilhelm IX., surnamed "Schwammhannes" (Jack with the mushroom) on account of a huge growth on his neck, did not like the handsome little scapegrace, who not seldom dared to rebel against the despotic whims of his master. In vain the old "Intendant" entreated his son to yield to the Landgrave; in vain the latter sent the audacious "Poniatowski" (as he ironically called the young Hotspur) again and again into confinement; that embittered our Heinrich only so much the more. To prevent worse, his father sent the indomitable youth (then sixteen years old) to Brunswick to have him trained for an equerry by the then famous equestrian artist, Hünersdorf. As such the youth of eighteen years entered the service of Duke Alexander of Würtemburg, and soon after came with the latter to Koburg in the suite of the suitor. It was to turn out a suitorship for him, too. At a ball he saw the fifteen-year old Christelchen Stockmar, and fell over head and ears in love with the sweet, gay child. On the very same evening the young equerry, during a graceful minuet, declared his love in fiery terms to his lovely partner, and successfully stormed her heart. The following morning he stood before the widowed "Frau Landkammerräthin" asking for the hand of her daughter. It required many battles, and copious tears of enamoured Christelchen,

before her mother consented. Of course the marriage of such "children" was as yet not to be thought of. They were told "to wait a few years."

In autumn equerry Bauer came again to Koburg from Vienna to bring to Princess Antoinette the marriage-jewels from Prince Alexander. The latter soon followed. On the 15th of November the engagement of the young people was celebrated by a *dîner en famille*. The above-mentioned old journal says, concerning the 17th of November:—

"At a quarter to one at noon, the whole court assembled, though without strangers; whereupon the marriage of Prince Alexander of Würtemburg with Antoinette, second daughter of H.S.H. the Hereditary Prince of Koburg, was quietly performed by a minister of the church; whereupon dinner, attended by gentlemen of the court only: in the evening, play and supper.

"November 18th.—Early at nine o'clock all gentlemen, native and foreign, assembled at court, in order to congratulate and pay their respects, whereupon a service of thanks was held in the castle-chapel, amidst the sound of trumpets and big drums, and a discharge of cannon. At noon, also, all married ladies made their appearance at court, where dinner was served on three long tables, in the 'Riesensaal' (giant-hall). Cannons were fired to the toasts. In the evening there was a grand reception and play, and then again supper in the same hall as at noon."

But our old journal is silent about the dismayed, grief-stricken face exhibited by the angel-like, beautiful bride, as she sat beside her husband. Prince Alexander was shockingly ugly. A huge tumour disfigured his

forehead, and there was something brutish in his face. Besides the poor fellow suffered—suffered from a sad disease, that of gluttony. When the young bride awoke on the morning after the wedding, horror-stricken she saw her husband beside her gnawing a big ham-bone with brutish ferocity—a sight which the unfortunate princess could never forget.

Prince Alexander suffered from another not less odious disease—the most sordid avarice. His equerry, Heinrich Bauer, had once, at the peril of his own, saved the prince's life by drawing him out of a bog, into which he had sunk up to the neck whilst hunting, but in doing so, had lost his gold watch with the beautiful seals attached. The prince, in the first impulse of gratitude, promised to make good the loss, but forgot again and again, although his equerry often reminded him of it in his bold way. When the prince asked, "Bauer, what time is it by your watch?" the latter would make a quick movement to his fob, and then, as if suddenly recollecting, say, "Oh, I forgot, your Highness, that my watch is still in the bog, and has not yet—"

"All right, I know, Bauer. I shall remember it, and soon procure you another watch!"

But that was all. The duke has never paid his debt of gratitude to his equerry Bauer, or to Bauer's family.

It was nearly thirty years after that sad marriage in Koburg before I was face to face with Duke Alexander again. It was in 1828, on the occasion of a short engagement which I was fulfilling at St. Petersburg, when royal Prussian court actress. Duke Alexander, as brother of the Empress-mother Maria,

had settled in St. Petersburg and held the appointments of Imperial Russian General-in-Chief and Director-General of the land and water communications of the Russian empire. Death had long ago freed poor Princess Antoinette from this monster. His Highness desired to see the widow and daughter of his former equerry Bauer. A peculiar shudder seized me when I entered with my mother the dismal, gloomy palace of Prince Alexander, which was surrounded by tall trees, the stillness of death prevailing in it.

What an unsympathetic personage stood over against us! A thick, inflated body upon thin legs in silk stockings and buckle shoes; the broad ugly face flushed and unmeaning; upon his bald, flat brow the huge shining bump; his eyes glassy and bloodshot. Turning in his trembling hands a golden snuff-box, his Highness was hardly able to address the customary conventional questions to us. Only one single word to my mother did not sound hollow.

"I was the unconscious cause of your marriage with Heinrich Bauer, when I brought him with me to Koburg and afterwards sent him there with the marriage-jewels. Bauer was a handsome cavalier and fitting suitor for the charming Christiane Stockmar."

I could not help reminding his Highness, as soon as an occasion offered, of the little adventure in the bog which he had together with his equerry, and of the watch lost on that occasion.

His Highness, however, prudently remembered nothing about this little adventure. He did not even engage a private box for himself on my benefit night.

Indignant, I said to my mother, "How well my father

did in giving up this miser and taking service as equerry with the noble Archduke Ludwig in Vienna!"

Prince Alexander, together with his spouse and his equerry, Heinrich Bauer, left Koburg only on the 2nd of February, 1799, "in order to return to the imperial-royal army; on which occasion the leave-taking was very sad. The young people accompanied them as far as Lichtenfels. . . ." Also Christelchen Stockmar mourned after her beloved Heinrich Bauer (to whom she was secretly betrothed), but without renouncing all the pleasures of her young maidenhood. Thus she was a diligent and much-liked member of the Koburg amateur company. I have before me two old play-bills of that period.

"With his Highness's permission there will be performed upon the ducal court theatre, by an amateur company, on Wednesday, the 6th of November, 1799, *Die Schachmaschine, oder Geniestreich über Geniestreich*, a comedy in four acts, adapted from the English. Mademoiselle Stockmar will play the part of the heroine, Julie von Wangen."

In August, 1800, Prince Alexander of Würtemburg took service in the Russian army, being first appointed to the commandantship of Riga.

The reigning duke, Ernst Friedrich, died on the 8th of September. A post-mortem examination revealed two large stones in his body. Duke Franz Friedrich Anton succeeded to the throne. His sons were the Hereditary Prince Ernst and the Princes Ferdinand and Leopold.

It will, perhaps, not be uninteresting to read how an old Koburg duke was buried at that period. In an old journal of the gallant Imperial-Royal Field-marshal

Friedrich Josias of Koburg (from which I quote), which became the property of Prince Leopold, and was printed as MS. at his expense, may be found the following:—

"Towards evening the body of my deceased brother was placed on parade in the black-draped dining-hall to be viewed from six till eight o'clock, during which time the Chief Marshal von Wangenheim, Marshal von Bocksberg, two grooms in waiting, two officers, two chamberlains, and six lacqueys stood at the two sides. Before eight the whole court, all counsellors, all strangers, officers, the town council, the clergy, the professors and students, as well as the oldest citizens, had to appear at court in prescribed mourning. The young members of the court repaired to the dowager-duchess to condole with her.

"From the castle down to the Schloss and Herren-gasse, from the market-place and a part of the Stein-gasse down to the town church, the three companies of the land regiment were drawn up in line; citizens in equal number with torches being distributed between the soldiers by twos. At eight o'clock all bells began to chime the funeral knell, which continued during the whole ceremony. At a quarter past eight the body was carried by master tradesmen through the castle-chapel to the hearse, drawn by six horses, at the two sides of which stood the estates of the duchy, and beside them lacqueys with torches. Here-upon the procession began to move in prescribed order towards the town church, where it was lifted off the hearse and carried through the estates to the ducal tomb, followed only by the two marshals. This having been accomplished, the procession returned in

the same order to the ducal palace, where, at half-past ten, all dispersed. . . ."

In January, 1801, Heinrich Bauer was again in Koburg, to urge his mother-in-law to hasten his marriage. Various feasts were held at that time.

"On the 19th January, as the birthday of H.H. the reigning duchess, all the young members of the family, with some ladies and cavaliers of the court dressed as peasants, assembled at the residence of the Chief Marshal von Wangenheim, from whence they went with music into the quarters of the duchess, introducing themselves as the village commune of Ketchendorf, who had come to pay their respects, which, intended as it was for a surprise, came off very well. In the evening a drawing-room was held at the Princess of Würtemburg's."

The *fiancés* also took an active part in the theatricals. Upon the other play-bill which my mother kept as a relic I read,—

"By most gracious consent, Wednesday, 28th January, 1801. A performance by some theatrical amateurs: *Das Schreibpult, oder die Gefahren der Jugend.* A play in four acts by Kotzebue. *Dramatis personæ:* Diethelm, a young merchant, *Herr Privy Counsellor von Wangenheim;* Hermann, his first clerk, *Herr Wirth, Advocate to the Duke;* Flink, his servant, *Herr Bauer, equerry,* &c., &c., &c." All, all, every one, long since dust and ashes!

"Admission: first parterre, 48 kr., pit, 30 kr., gallery, 15 kr.—Place of performance, the ducal court theatre; commences at five o'clock."

Soon after, the happy equerry, Heinrich Bauer, led his charming young wife, Christiane, to Vienna; and

now, after twenty-one years, his widow returned with her children to her native country.

There many changes had meanwhile taken place. Princess Juliane, Grand-Duchess Anna Feodorowna, had left her tyrannical husband, Constantine, and had returned to Koburg. Princess Victoria had married Emich Karl, Hereditary Prince of Leiningen, and, as his widow, in 1818, Edward, Duke of Kent, who, however, had died soon after in 1820, leaving behind him a little daughter, Victoria—"white and plump, like a stuffed pigeon." Princess Sophie had chosen as her husband the Austrian Captain, Count Emanuel Mensdorf.

The Duke Franz had died shortly after the battle of Jena, whilst the Hereditary Prince Ernst was staying in Königsberg with the fugitive court, being ill of typhus fever. The French occupied Koburg and governed the state. On the 28th June, 1807, the reigning Duke Ernst (then twenty-three years old) made his entry into Koburg, amidst the ringing of the bells, the firing of cannon, and the bugling of the postillions.

"H.S.H. the Prince of Leiningen and Prince Leopold, mounted on horseback, preceded the ducal carriage, whereupon H.S.H. the duchess followed with the Princess of Leiningen. The procession moved towards the common, where the duke alighted and was received by a group of maidens, about sixty in number, all dressed in white, their heads decked with oak-leaves and cornflowers arranged so as to form V.V.E., *i.e.*, 'Vivat Ernst!' Two of the foremost girls presented upon a silk cushion a wreath of flowers and a poem; two smaller girls placed at

his feet bouquets from their cornucopia. Here the duke resolved to continue his entry on foot, the maidens following in due order."

The young duke, fond of life and love, soon made his court, in spite of the sorrows of war, the scene of numerous feasts, each more fanciful than the other.

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In October, 1807, the reigning Duke Ernst had gone to Paris with his youngest brother, Prince Leopold, then seventeen years old, to do homage to the all-powerful Emperor Napoleon. Here, in Paris, Duke Ernst began a love intrigue which was soon to become known to all the world, though not redounding to the honour of the House of Koburg.

At a ball in Paris, the handsome, fiery Duke Ernst saw for the first time a charming young lady of fourteen years, Pauline Adélaide Alexandre Panam, who was descended from a Greek family residing in Montpellier, and was soon known universally by the name of "la belle Grecque." The amorous duke at once made vigorous court to the beautiful Greek, offering her his protection, his influence and his fortune. She might regard him, he said, as her brother. One day he proposed to her to become the lady-companion of his sister, the Grand Duchess Constantine, and the outcome of it was that the beautiful Greek very soon succumbed to his artifices.

In April, 1808, the duke returned to Koburg from Paris. Mademoiselle Pauline followed her lover, who had promised her that his mother was to receive her among her court-ladies. She travelled, by order of the duke, in male attire. But hardly had she arrived

in Koburg when the disappointments of the unfortunate girl commenced. The duke said he was sorry that he was obliged to communicate to her that his mother refused to attach her to her person, because she was—French! but that he would provide for her with his wonted affection. The poor little French girl, still in male attire, felt dreadfully bored, in quiet Koburg, especially as her protector held her like a prisoner, secluded from the outer world, so that nobody might find out her compromising presence,—the very same experience which I was destined to have in England at the hands of the present brother of that cautious duke! Soon Pauline had to leave Koburg again by command of her ducal protector, and proceeded to occupy a still smaller dwelling in the neighbouring farm of Esslau. Here the duke introduced his mistress to his sisters, Countess Mensdorf and the Grand Duchess Constantine. Prince Leopold, eighteen years old, paid an amorous visit to the mistress of his brother. He forced his way into her bedroom at seven o'clock in the morning, when the fair lady was still in bed.

In the "Mémoires d'une jeune Grecque" Pauline depicts Prince Leopold in these words: "He was a tall young man with a false look and a disagreeable, sentimental smile. After having excused (in wretched French) his manner of introducing himself to my presence, he began to lament my fate and to fall foul of his brother." The duke had heard of this visit, and caused his fair mistress a scene of furious jealousy, which so agitated Pauline that she was ill for a fortnight.

When the mistress held out to her protector the

joyous prospect of soon becoming a father, he grew more affectionate and attentive. He even had her take part in rural court-festivities, in various disguises, now as a peasant, now as a lady; and on those occasions he always found an opportunity for some demonstrations of affection. Thus Pauline, after a fête at Rosenau, had to ascend a ladder in order to enter the window of her lover's room, amid lightning and thunder and a perfect torrent of rain, and when the ladder proved too short, H.S.H held down a chair from the balcony on which Pauline, wet as a drowned kitten, nevertheless managed to clamber up.

The lying-in apartment of the unfortunate Greek was established by Duke Ernst in the distant Amorbach, the summer-residence of Prince von Leiningen, under the eyes of this brother-in-law, and the duke's sister Victoria. The Duchess-mother of Koburg, from the pious race of Reuss-Ebersdorff, wrote to the mistress of her eldest son the following characteristic letter in French :—

"Adieu, my poor Pauline! Preserve within you the pious feelings which you exhibit in your letter, and this God of goodness who judges our hearts will have compassion on yours which is so beautiful! He will pardon you your past errors, if you return to the path of virtue as a believer; it is not so difficult as people think. You will soon be a mother! Oh, may this sacred name, although you will have owed it to a false step, fill your soul! It will save you for the future! As soon as your sister arrives, withdraw as far as possible from these parts to be confined.

"(Signed)

"THE DOWAGER-DUCHESS OF SAXE-KOBURG."

Pauline felt naturally very unhappy in Amorbach, for none troubled themselves about her, nobody provided for her. She addressed Prince von Leiningen, and received this little-comforting reply: "I know the people with whom you have to do. I cannot sufficiently recommend you to distrust them. For have I myself not been the dupe of their promises? And did they not amuse me with fair words before I entered their family? And since I entered it, they have not kept a single one of their engagements."

Then Pauline set out again for Koburg. The duke ordered her to keep to her room there. But the fair dame did not heed it, but bravely forced her way even into the apartments of the Dowager-Duchess. A violent scene ensued between the two ladies, till H.S.H. again promised all sorts of things. The very same evening the duke reiterated these promises: "My mother will provide for thy future, and that of our child." Next day the duchess-mother induced the unfortunate girl, through combined flatteries and threats, to swear that she would never become the recognized mistress of the duke; that she would, on the contrary, try to keep him at a distance from her; and after she had sworn this, "my dear Pauline, my daughter," was permitted to embrace the pious duchess, and even to lend her a very becoming *robe en cœur*, as H.S.H. wanted to get a similar dress made after this Parisian pattern.

In September, 1808, Duke Ernst went to St. Petersburg for six months, without troubling himself any further about his victim. Deprived of all means, Pauline's sister, who had hastened to the spot from Paris, applied to the duchess-mother, who was then

taking the waters in Karlsbad. She received the laconic reply, "I demand the most absolute secrecy regarding the relations between Pauline and my son! I am indulgent, but am capable of vengeance. (Signed) AUGUSTA."

Later on the dowager-duchess sent five louis-d'or to the unfortunate lady, along with advice to adopt the style of a married lady, and to say that her husband was under orders travelling abroad. Prince Leopold added 100 gulden, but at the same time complained much of Pauline's want of economy. Very characteristic of my honest, economical Prince Leopold!

On the 4th of March, Pauline, without money, linen, fuel, and sometimes food, is delivered of a ducal son in Frankfort on the Maine. Now the duke also sends her 1000 francs from Memel, with the command to pass herself off as the widow of a superior French officer who had been killed in Poland. She might adopt any name she chose. Later on the duke decides that she was to call herself the widow of a Hanoverian officer.

In February, 1809, the duke returns from his Russian journey. Pauline sends to him the first little locks of the little Ernst August. In July the duke visits mother and son in Frankfort, and again makes the most brilliant promises to her, of course without keeping them.

Then Pauline, or as she is now called officially, "Madame A. H. Alexandre," with the courage of hunger and despair, suddenly drops down at the court of Koburg, like a bursting bomb-shell. The duke and his worthy mother are beside themselves with fright and rage. The pious dowager-duchess

at last caressingly gives this advice to the poor unfortunate: "Young and pretty as you are, you have a rich future and much pleasure before you. Give me the child and—amuse yourself in Paris."

When Pauline does not yield, the duke and his mother send their servants into the hostelry where Madame Alexandre lodges, and have her belongings thrown out of the windows into the street, with an order to the landlord to supply no more food to the obstinate Frenchwoman. But when the servants were preparing to rob the mother of her child, she rushed upon them like a raging lioness: "Monsters! You venture to touch the son of the duke? First you must kill me!" Stupified, the servants steal away. Pauline remains in Koburg. The negotiations last four weeks. Then Major Czymbowsky lays before the discharged mistress, by order of the duke, the following agreement:

"Madame A. H. Alexandre is granted an annual pension of 3000 francs.

"Madame A. H. Alexandre will speedily quit the country of H.H. the Duke of Saxe-Koburg, and never return to it. Otherwise articles 1 to 5 of this agreement would lose their force.

"By command, (Signed) Von Czymbowsky."

Pauline repairs with her son to Dresden, of course without receiving her pension of 3000 francs. Only through the good offices of the French ambassador (Serra), she succeeds in obtaining some small sums from the duke. But when H.H. in May, 1812, went to Dresden with Prince Ferdinand to assist at the meeting of the Emperors Alexander and Napoleon,

the amorous duke visited his lady-love affectionately in the Hôtel de Pologne, where Pauline lived with the little Ernst August, partly from succour by the Austrian ambassador, Esterhazy, and several French generals, and partly by the pity of the landlord. The duke vows to raise her pension to 6000 francs, but soon after informs his victim that she would henceforth receive only 1000 francs, but that H.H. for mercy's and pity's sake *(par grace et par bonté)* would have the child (whom he never had recognized as his son) educated.

Owing to the disturbed state of the country during the war, Pauline returns to Frankfort. There she once more meets the Duke Ernst, who has taken the command of the 5th German Corps against his once idolized Emperor Napoleon, whips his little Ernst August, and overwhelms the boy's mother with insults, till Grand Duke Constantine espouses the cause of the abandoned mistress and the whipped son of his ducal brother-in-law, ridiculing the duke: "He reigns over six peasants and two village surgeons!"

Now also Duke Ernst returns to mother and son in pretended repentance and affection, opens his purse, and sends his beloved under the escort of a court-runner to Vienna. On the road, so Pauline maintains, several attempts were made to kill the inconvenient witnesses of ducal lust; once through the upsetting of the carriage in an abyss, then repeatedly through poison.

In Vienna, Pauline finds in the aged Prince de Ligne a protector, and, it was said, a lover. Prince de Ligne leads Duke Ernst back into the arms of "Madame

Alexandre," during the Vienna Congress, and compels him to reopen his purse. All the world is interested in the beautiful Greek whom Prince de Ligne, this great connoisseur of beauty, not only calls "one of the most beautiful women in the world," but "*ange aussi.*" Prince Metternich offers to bring up little Ernst August as his son, not from kindness, but, as the Greek asserts, to render her harmless, in the interest of the duke. The latter would have removed the troublesome person through the Vienna police, but her powerful friends, Prince de Ligne, Prince Eugène Beauharnais, Prince Narischkin, Grand Duke Constantine, Lord Stewart, and others protect her, and furnish her with the means of living which the father of her son has again withdrawn. An Italian, Pioni, makes six times the attempt to poison her. At whose bidding?

On the advice of Prince de Ligne the young Greek writes her memoirs, and, at the death of the prince, she and her son seek refuge in France, there to publish them. To prevent this the duke makes new golden promises, which are, of course, again not kept.

About this time the Russian general, Von Nostitz, once adjutant to Prince Louis Ferdinand, who fell at Saalfeld, writes the following, in his journal of the Vienna Congress, concerning Duke Ernst:—"The Duke of Koburg is tall and stout, but not to the special credit of big men, who are only too often, and not without reason, charged with smallness of mind. The Koburg family are indeed generally honest and well disposed, but mostly wanting in ability, particularly Prince Ferdinand, at present an Austrian general, who has a handsome, regular face, with a

thin, longish nose, in which you may discover anything you like, except sagacity."

At the age of thirty-three, Duke Ernst married, in 1817, the charming Princess Luise of Gotha, the heiress of that duchy, after the hand of the Russian Grand Duchess Anna Paulowna, formerly promised, had ultimately been refused him on account of the scandal with the young Greek.

The old, original "Patriarch of Rodach," the very reverend Superintendent Hohnbaum, the paternal friend of the young poet Rückert, son of Amtmann von Ebern, writes in 1817 about the lovely princess to his son in England :—

"Our duke has wedded the Princess of Gotha. This caused a terrible hubbub in Koburg. Everything was done with a view to splendour and pomp in Rodach, where I had to look after the arrangements on the border myself, with a view to simplicity. My old head had to produce a triumphal arch, and two pieces of poetry! In Rodach the illustrious party dined, and I had the pleasure of sitting beside the young princess, who also remembered you. She is a most natural and amiable creature. They will, however, put her in Koburg into the polishing-mill and sieve, you will see, till she is as flat and smooth as the rest."

What deep penetration had this old Superintendent of Rodach! The best proof of this is the melancholy end of this unhappy princess.

A few months later the Superintendent of Rodach again writes to his son :—

"You have wronged the young princess in remarking that her remembrance of you was probably only an idle

court phrase. She told me much of her father's intercourse with you at that time. Altogether I do not think that any idle phrase would profane her lips, nor that any court vice can ever have ruined her heart. I consider her an unusually rare being."

Poor young princess, whom a cruel fate made successor to that beautiful Greek, and to so many, many others!

* * * * * *

Such was the situation in which my mother, after an absence of years, found her dear home on her return to it, in which I for the first time entered Koburg, unconscious that in this town my fate was to be decided for my whole life,—portentously even now, and seven years later still more calamitously.

The family of my mother received us very affectionately. Uncle "Justizamtmann" had come from Rodach with his youngest daughter, the quicksilver-like, sprightly Riekchen to welcome us. A jolly, jovial, amiable uncle! His nephew, Ernst Baron Stockmar, once Treasurer to Queen Victoria, and later in a similar confidential position with the Crown Princess of Prussia, till a disease of the spine compelled him to live in melancholy retirement, relates, in the memoirs of his father (Johann Ernst Gotthelf Stockmar), "He was a lively, cheerful, humorous, kindly, benevolent gentleman, accomplished, fond of books, a scientific jurist. He was proprietor of the baronial estate of Obersiemau, on the Bavarian border."

Also my eldest cousin, Karoline, and her husband "President" Opitz, pleased me much with their heartiness. I was most interested, of course, in my

cousin Christian, who, by his cleverness, had risen to the rank of a Baron, and become the intimate friend of a prince.

Cousin Christian was then—in the summer of 1822—thirty-five years of age, not handsome, but of good make and elegant appearance, and somewhat English in his manners; his eyes were bright and intelligent; they looked at me so penetratingly, as if they would search my most secret thoughts. His kindly-pleasant and winning smile, however, was frequently accompanied by a look of self-consciousness, satire, and irony. Moreover, the mixture of German and English, of homely and court-like ways in his bearing, confounded me. His whole remarkable career was represented in this.

The following characteristic trait of Christian's boyhood is told by his eldest son Ernst. His mother listened to him in astonishment when he once, at the family-table, exclaimed, pointing to the dishes, "In my house all that will have to be of silver some day!" But she calmly replied, "If you can manage it, I shan't object!"

From 1810 Stockmar became assistant to his maternal uncle, the physician Sommer, in Koburg.

Christian Stockmar writes of that period about himself:—

"In the year 1812 I was appointed 'physicus' for town and country, and in this quality I established a large military hospital in Koburg during that great year of war, of which I became managing physician. It soon filled, first with the sick and wounded of the French and allied troops, then with Russians. The hospital typhus, which followed the armies everywhere,

also visited this hospital. Several fatal cases among those who had come in immediate contact with the lazaretto, spread such fear among the physicians that only an old surgeon and I had the courage to do duty there. I, on my part, continued till some time into November, when, after having resisted infection for more than a year, I was seized by the hospital fever in its most virulent form. For three weeks I lay between life and death; but after the real illness was over, I recovered so fast as to be enabled to march to the Rhine with the contingent of the duchy of Saxony, as their surgeon-major. Arrived in Mainz, I was appointed staff-surgeon to the Fifth Army Corps, and was in command of the hospitals then being erected under Stein's government in Mainz, Oppenheim, Guntersblum, and Worms. Here I remained as one of the managing physicians till autumn, 1814, when I returned to Koburg."

During these campaigns Stockmar had come in contact with young Prince Leopold. When the latter, in 1816, became the consort of the Princess of Wales (Charlotte), he invited Christian Stockmar to England as his body-physician.

When Princess Charlotte died on the 6th of November, 1817, in childbed, the body-physician had so thoroughly gained the confidence of his prince that the latter made him promise, before the dead body of his wife, and with tears and embraces, to remain for ever with him as his friend! So Cousin Christian had quitted his profession and until now lived with Prince Leopold in England, or travelling abroad, as his secretary, treasurer, court-marshal, and confidant. Now he had just returned from a journey to Italy

with the prince, who, however, had gone to Vienna in the beginning of September, to meet the Emperor Alexander, whilst Stockmar remained behind in Koburg with his young wife.

Frau Fanny von Stockmar was always a puzzle to me, more especially as Cousin Christian's wife. She was the only daughter of Christian Stockmar's maternal uncle, Sommer, a wealthy apothecary; she was by no means pretty; brought up in the style of the lower middle class, she had a harsh character, which became more bitter and sour as she grew older—just like a mixture of gall-nuts and vinegar. It was a match without love. Christian married the 100,000 thalers, to secure for himself a perfectly independent position in his relations to the prince. He knew that in this independence lay his power. This political and personal power the Baron Christian von Stockmar managed to preserve, even to his death, during a lengthy career at the courts of London and Brussels! He loved money not for its own sake, but he loved it as a means to an end, to his ambitious ends. Love of honour and a desire to rule were the chief features of his character—the main-springs of his action. And thus he married his unamiable cousin Fanny Sommer's money, and took reluctantly the wife into the bargain. But, being a clever diplomatist, he knew how to arrange matters so that his wife was not particularly burdensome to him. He only married her that he might live free and unshackled in England, whilst she remained with their children in Koburg. Now and then he would visit his family in Koburg, in summer, and then brought with him for his wife beautiful diamonds in

place of love, presents of princely personages to whom the clever diplomatist, Baron Stockmar, had been of service. Sometimes several years would elapse without Stockmar seeing his wife and children. So far as I know, he has never taken them with him to England or to Brussels. She sat in quiet Koburg consumed with jealousy, but scraping, scraping, scraping together money upon money. As years went on she hardened more and more, till she became avarice personified; and, by means of this avarice, she was able later on to take a terrible revenge on her poor, old, slowly-dying husband for her neglected youth.

Of that by-and-by.

Cousin Christian was then, 1822, the most amiable and charming of cousins. He purchased from my mother her last paternal heritage, the beautiful Glockenberg, near Koburg. He procured for our Louis a situation in the commercial house of his brother, Karl Stockmar, in Augsburg, and made a happy actress of me. He had quickly won my whole childlike confidence, and thus it happened that I poured out before my dear cousin my brimful overflowing young artist-heart and told him my story, that I was to be a nasty governess, with a long nose and spectacles, because my uncle, General Bauer, in Kassel, did not wish that his name should be on a playbill, and that a "*Bauer* with the noble blood of the Poniatowskis in her veins should stand on the ignoble boards."

Cousin Christian made me recite before him my favourite poems by Hebel, Schiller, and his favourite pieces of Rückert; he listened with a significant smile,

which gradually grew more encouraging, saying eventually in his original, humorous way —

"Aunt Christiane, that which is destined to be good vinegar turns sour soon. Hitherto our family has not been blessed with artistic talent; I shall be glad to be able to call an artiste 'cousin,' and a cousin an artiste; but one thing I must insist upon, Lina, that you turn out a true, dignified, and able *comédienne*, and that you put on for every performance new shoes and gloves; *that* you owe to your art, and to the respectability of your family."

Thus it was resolved—in spite of my uncle, the general in Kassel—that I might become an actress. In great joy I flung myself on the neck of my good, clever, excellent cousin. In that hour there was hardly over the whole world a happier mortal than young Linchen. How charming was life! How good all men! How the sun smiled in his brightest gold; how merrily the birds sang; how delightful were the flowers in their fragrance and bloom! All day I could have danced and sung, "Freuet euch des Lebens!"

In the company of Cousin Christian we also went to pay a visit at the ducal court. Duke Ernst received us very friendlily (although he was suffering at the time) in the charming Rosenau, his own creation. He had been gored by a wounded stag while out deer-stalking, and was still carrying his arm in a sling, and his head bandaged. He was a tall, stately man. The meaning of his fiery scrutinizing looks was to be revealed to me by-and-by.

The beautiful, shadowy park saw me soon at

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boisterous play with two merry boys, the dark-haired Prince Ernst, four years old (now Duke of Koburg-Gotha) and the fair-haired Prince Albert, exceedingly sweet, indeed angelic, in his whole appearance (then three years of age, destined to be the husband of Queen Victoria, and the father of the Crown Princess of Prussia).

I saw in passing the mother of the young princes—the unhappy Duchess Luise; an elegant, attractive woman, with fair locks and blue eyes. Even at that time grave discords were troubling their married life and darkened the sunny youth of their children.

The scandal about the "young Greek" was still going on, although she had had many successors in Koburg since. Madame Alexandre Panam threatened the publication of her memoirs. To avenge herself for these many acts of infidelity on the part of her husband, and to distract herself in the loneliness of her heart, the duchess had now likewise begun to spin love-threads on her own account. In Koburg the very sparrows on the roof twittered stories of the amours both of duke and duchess.

In Kesschendorf we were received by the pious dowager-duchess very coolly and stiffly. I felt a shiver come over me when near this severe and pharisaical lady. On the wall there hung the portrait of a handsome tall young man with large melancholy eyes and an earnest expression about his delicate mouth.

He was a favourite son of this frosty princess, Prince Leopold, who was still mourning the untimely loss of his spouse the Princess of Wales.

What a profound compassion I felt for the beauti-

ful, melancholy prince! Was he not, besides, the kind master and friend of good, humorous Cousin Christian?

And after seven years?

The kind gods granted us their most gracious present when they veiled the future from us.

Invited by good Uncle "Justizamtmann" Stockmar, we paid, on our return journey, a short but interesting visit in the little town of Rodach. The lively cousin Riekchen, Cousin Christian's four-and-twenty-year-old sister, no sooner saw me than she conducted me to her dear parsonage, to her revered bard, the hoary "Superintendent" Hohnbaum, the paternal friend of Friedrich Rückert, who has often sojourned in this parsonage of patriarchal hospitality writing verses, and who made his kind host immortal in the idyl "Rodach." And before me there stood the most original, most amiable of all parsons, a little, beautiful, rosy old man of seventy-five years, with a white night-cap, blouse-vest of white worsted, and long white worsted stockings that had, however, slipped down dangerously upon his well-trodden slippers.

The very house of a patriarch! There the spinning maids would sit in the evening in the same parlour with the family, where "the father" composed his sermons, wrote poetry, painted, or performed music, and where the rustic meal stood upon the table in pewter dishes.

Many an original anecdote characterises the old man, who was vigorous in mind and sound in heart, who would call a spade a spade even before their Highnesses in Koburg and their Serene Highnesses in Hildburghausen.

Thus he did to the Duke of Hildburghausen, the brother-in-law of Queen Luise of Prussia, who was very fond of "the old man of Rodach," and frequently invited him to dinner. The "superintendent" would come to court riding on his long-legged nag. Very often the duke graciously whispered to him there —

"Dear Hohnbaum, your old nag is wearing out fast. I shall make you the present of a young one; rely upon that."

But his Highness the Duke of Hildburghausen had just as bad a memory for the "superintendent's" horse as Duke Alexander of Würtemburg had for my father's gold watch.

One day when the "superintendent" was again dining at court, and towards the conclusion of dinner, a confection called "Spanish wind" was served. "The old man of Rodach" muttered —

"Real court pastry!"

"Why?" asked a courtier.

"It promises much and contains little!" was the naïve answer of the old man.

"A-a-h, so, I understand!" murmured the duke, not without embarrassment.

And when the "superintendent" arrived at home on his old nag in the evening, he found standing at the manger a splendid brown horse from the ducal stud. Upon it the old man rode next morning to court, to thank the duke with a sly smile.

On another occasion old Hohnbaum met the Duke of Hildburghausen in the vicarage of Eishausen, when the vicar ventured to hint to his sovereign that the swine and deer of the duke almost annihilated the peasants' joyful prospects every year! But the duke,

a passionate sportsman, indignantly broke off the conversation until the frank "superintendent" from Rodach in Koburg reverted to the subject, saying eventually to the very face of the sovereign of Hildburghausen —

"Your Highness prefers your stags to your peasants!"

Then the duke, crimson with wrath, sprang up and left the room without salute. But he was no sooner seated in his carriage than he sent for the blunt "superintendent," and, taking his meerschaum-pipe from his mouth, handed it to the old man, saying —

"You mean well both for my peasants and me. Here, take this pipe as a keepsake in remembrance of this hour; but you need not be so rough."

Did the peasants and their fields profit much by this rude lesson?—Spanish wind, court-pastry!

When the Princess Paul of Würtemburg and Amalie of Hildburghausen once paid the old "superintendent" a visit in Rodach, and had to wait a little at the door till the old man was ready to receive them, he said slyly —

"Your Highnesses will graciously pardon me; I had to pull up my stockings first."

Once an old woman from his own parish comes to buy corn from him at a low price. When he refuses to sell her any, she mutters, "Cursed corn-finch!" He pretends not to hear it. After a while she comes again cringingly to ask the "Herr Superintendent" to draw up a memorial to government for her! Immediately he sits down and draws up the petition. Enchanted she inquires what she owes him? The old man answers kindly —

"Oh, not at all! Nothing! The 'cursed corn-finch' has had pleasure in doing the old she-monkey this favour!"

In music and painting the old man far exceeded mere dilettanteism. He composed and set to music several cantatas for his church; he played and sang at his costly Vienna grand piano (which looked strange indeed beside the plain scrubbed oaken tables and chairs) songs of his own composition, which, though simple, touched the heart and brought tears to the eye.

Once when, after one of his affecting little ditties, a celebrated songstress executed a grand aria, and then proudly looked about for applause, the old man said to her bluntly—

"You have sung the pocket-handkerchief to my tears!"

On Saturday, the 30th of January, 1825, there was to be a masked ball in Rodach. Riekchen Stockmar was dressed already for the fête; over-cheerful, as usual, she took her father in her arms and danced with him about the room. Then the cry of "Fire" was heard. A neighbour's house was on fire. With perfect presence of mind the "Justizamtmann" first puts the monies entrusted to him in safety, then he hastened to the back-part of the house to rescue his beloved books. But flames barred his way; he dropped down dead, his heart having suddenly ceased to beat. Whilst the corpse was being removed from the burning house to the parsonage, a black he-goat came up the back stairs, ran twice round the table, and then out the same way. Of course the people

afterwards said that "the devil had fetched Justizamtmann Stockmar."

At the funeral-sermon which the superintendent, then seventy-seven years old, delivered at the snow-covered grave of his friend Stockmar, not an eye remained dry. On the Sunday afterwards Hohnbaum celebrated his jubilee of fifty years' ministry. In the November following he was laid beside his beloved Stockmar in the frozen earth!

CHAPTER II.

THE CURTAIN RISES.

THE MYSTERIOUS COUNT AND COUNTESS—THEIR LIFE AND DEATH—KAROLINE BAUER RETURNS FROM KOBURG TO KARLSRUHE—HER FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE COURT STAGE, DEC. 22, 1822, AT THE AGE OF FIFTEEN—HER SUCCESS—HER FIRST LOVE—THE BISMARCKS—AMOUR OF FRIEDRICH WILHELM VON BISMARCK AND THE PRINCESS AUGUSTE OF NASSAU—THEIR SUBSEQUENT SECRET MARRIAGE—BISMARCK MAKES OVERTURES TO KAROLINE BAUER—HIS CRITICISM OF HER IN THE STUTTGART *Morgenblatt*—HIS DEATH—KAROLINE IS SUBJECTED TO ANOTHER TEMPTATION IN KARLSRUHE—THE GRAND DUKE LUDWIG—GREAT SUCCESS IN MANNHEIM.

THE return journey from Rodach to the neighbouring village of Eishausen took place towards the end of September. At that time the huge, gloomy castle of Eishausen enshrouded a remarkable secret which for years had greatly exercised the whole neighbourhood.

And there the spectral castle lay before us opposite the parsonage, with its lofty grey walls and desolate dead windows, as if deserted. Nothing stirred in

the court-yard, nobody appeared at the windows. But Parson Kühner could tell a great deal about his strange neighbours.

It was the beginning of the present century. Germany was inundated by French emigrants of high birth who had fled before the bloody Revolution.

Thus there had lived since 1803, in the little Swabian town of Ingelfingen, a gentleman and lady of distinguished appearance who were confidently assumed to be French emigrants, whose name, however, nobody knew. They were simply called the "count" and "countess." They lodged with the apothecary.

The "count" was a handsome, stately man of perhaps thirty odd years, of evident high-breeding and winning amiability. He was fond of chatting with his landlord about the events of the time, and exhibited great sympathy for the banished Royal Family of France. Sometimes he would visit the apothecary in his laboratory, where he showed no mean acquaintance with the chemical and medical sciences. He received several foreign newspapers, and corresponded with people in all quarters of the globe, but concerning his own family affairs and the lady who lived with him he never spoke. He was once only heard to regret that he had no children.

The people of Ingelfingen took their guest to be a French prince, perhaps even the Duke of Angoulême.

Still less was known about the stranger's fair companion. She had arrived, deeply veiled, in her private carriage. Whenever she walked out on the arm of the count, she always wore a thick veil, or else green spectacles. At home she was completely invisible

even for the apothecary's family, and for the servant who, hired in Ingelfingen, was strictly forbidden to enter the house except at certain fixed hours. Only people sometimes fancied they heard the countess gently weeping. All, however, were agreed in this, in spite of glasses and veil, that the strange lady was young and beautiful! Some even pretended to discover in her a striking resemblance to the unhappy daughter of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. At any rate she had a thoroughly Bourbon countenance.

A confidential chamberlain, who acted at the same time as their coachman, accompanied the mysterious pair, but he remained absolutely silent amid all the surrounding curiosity.

Suddenly, on an early morning of March, 1804, the strangers, coachman, and equipage had disappeared! The night before the count had received a letter which disturbed him greatly. During the night everything was packed and debts settled. To the apothecary the count gave valuable presents. Before Ingelfingen was astir the mysterious visitors had left the little town. Nobody knew where they had gone.

When soon afterwards the dreadful news ran through all the papers that Napoleon had, on the 14th of March, caused the Duke d'Enghien to be arrested in Ettenheim, a small place in Baden, and against all international law to be cruelly shot, then the Ingelfingeners put their heads together gravely. Yes, yes, our emigrant was also a Bourbon prince, who, being warned in time, had escaped from the executioner, Napoleon!

Some years later the *Swabian Mercury*—from what source?—contained the following:—

"A French emigrant of high birth, who formerly lived for some time in Ingelfingen, is dead."

Then there was mourning in Ingelfingen for the kind count, who surely must have been a prince. But what had become of his mysterious companion? The good Ingelfingeners did not dream in their innocence that one might send an announcement of one's own death to the papers, with the view of effacing one's traces from the earth before a dangerous enemy.

Meanwhile there lived in a quiet secluded farm in the Swabian Alps a mysterious couple of recluses, exhibiting a remarkable resemblance to the deceased and no-more-heard-of strangers of Ingelfingen, till, two years later, they also disappeared without leaving a trace behind them.

Soon afterwards, at the end of 1806, there stopped at the "Englische Hof," the most fashionable hotel in Hildburghausen, a closed carriage. The smart coachman opened the carriage door. A stately gentleman, about forty years old, very reserved in manner, helped out a young lady closely veiled, and, hat in hand, respectfully conducted her to the apartments held in readiness for them.

The servant in addressing the stranger, or speaking of him, never called him otherwise than, "der gnädige Herr." Letters which arrived for his lordship bore the address, "Baron Vavel de Versay." But in Hildburghausen the people soon talked about the rich French "count" who was so liberal with his money, and of the beautiful young "countess" who, when driving out in her beautiful private carriage, drawn by greys, always wore spectacles or a veil, and whom nobody yet had seen properly, or spoken

to, and of the taciturn servant who conversed with nobody.

After some time the count moved to a small private dwelling, sold his greys, and only drove out with hired post-horses. The countess entered the carriage in the closed-in court-yard, and the postillion had the strictest order never to turn round to look at his passengers. Corridor and staircase the count caused to be separated, by plankings, from the dwelling of the landlady. She had to see that the greatest quiet prevailed in the house, and to throw all letters addressed with the name of Vavel de Versay into a basket hanging at the door of the staircase, and then to ring the bell. One day, when the children were crowding at the back-window to see the countess mount the carriage, the count threatened that he would quit his expensive apartments if such improprieties were repeated. On another occasion, the count chased away with raised pistol, very wroth, a begging journeyman who had entered by the staircase door, which had accidentally been left open.

Sometimes the strangers would leave for an absence of a few days. Then the confidential servant again mounted the box, and drove himself. Nobody ever learned, positively, whither these mysterious journeys led; but their destination was presumed to be either Mainz or Frankfort on the Maine, where, at that period, lived many emigrants of rank.

It was towards the end of September, 1810, that the "count" and "countess," and the confidential servant, went to live in the old unoccupied castle of Eishausen, upon the Hildburghausen domain, on the road between Hildburghausen and Koburg. On the

ground-floor lived the old custodian and his wife, who had to see that the greatest quiet prevailed in the castle. The son of Parson Kühner gives the following graphic description of this seclusion :—

"When a boy of nine, I was once sent on a message to the old caretaker of the castle. I went timidly, and on tiptoe, up the stone stairs, yet before I had touched the bell the door opened quietly from within, and the custodian gently, with a few friendly whispered words, pushed me into his parlour. The good old man in his coffee-brown coat—which was half dresscoat and half surtout, and had two rows of metal buttons of the size of a crown-piece from the top down to his ankle—on that occasion gave me a very old picture-book. But he only spoke to me in whispers, and I was glad when I was once more out of the enchanted castle.

"The chamberlain, major-domo, or valet, was a grave, measured, taciturn man, with a stout-built, broad-shouldered figure, a full face, and snow-white hair. He never appeared except in richly-braided livery; he was a regular frequenter of the church, but had little connection with the people of the village. Nobody ever heard from him anything about the story of his master, nor even got the hint that he had something to conceal. In the village, he had the reputation of a wonder-worker. He could stop bleeding, foretell the weather, &c., a reputation which was probably only based on an education that seemed superior to his station. I myself have neither spoken to the man nor heard him speak, although I lived for four or five years with him in the same village.

"The cook was never permitted to leave the castle. When, after years of confinement, the count sent her

one night in an extraordinary emergency to the parson, she could hardly drag herself along over the road. She had lost the faculty of walking on level ground!

"The seclusion of the chamberlain and the cook did not, however, remain without consequences. The cook had two children in quick succession; the first, a boy, was baptized Papageno, by the special command of the count. Both children were, immediately after they were born, removed from the castle, and brought up in the neighbouring village of Steinfeld. Papageno, or 'Papperle,' as the people called him, caused the count much annoyance in after-life by his irregularities. No suspicion was attached to the count himself with regard to these children.

"To effect a communication with the outer world, and especially to do errands at Hildburghausen, the count had engaged a married couple, of the name of Schmidt, who lived in the town, but who came daily out to Eisleben, being known to the people only by the terms of the 'errand-man,' and the 'errand-woman.' They, too, by the strictest order of the count, avoided all unnecessary talk with the people. A charwoman, who lived in the village, was never permitted to enter the castle.

"The order of the day was pretty well fixed. Early at four or five o'clock, the charwoman knocked at a window of the castle, handed through a window the milk to the cook, received the newspaper for the parson, and other messages.

"At nine o'clock, the 'errand-woman' was seen coming from the town; she brought victuals and other things, also the letters and newspapers of the morning-mail. To her the castle was opened.

"The chamberlain, besides his private service in the castle, attended to the horses which had been purchased. At ten o'clock, as a rule, the carriage came to the front of the castle door. The count would appear with the lady deeply veiled, would conduct her, hat in hand, to the carriage, and, having lifted her in, would enter the carriage himself. Then the two huge, coal-black horses issued from the village at a rattling speed, the carriage always closed; as driver on the box sat the chamberlain, wearing a three-cornered hat, and a livery richly braided with silver. They proceeded on the road to Rodach. A few hundred yards on this side of the town, the carriage turned and wended its way home. Sometimes, but rarely, the count would drive alone; the lady never.

"Towards noon the 'errand-woman' left the castle; in the afternoon the 'errand-man' arrived with the afternoon newspapers, and for new errands. In the afternoons of Wednesdays and Saturdays, a third man from the village went to town to fetch the evening paper.

"What an apparatus of attendance for two recluses who had, seemingly, for ever done with the life without! Would it not have been very much the same, if they had received their papers a few hours sooner or later?

"Soon after the birth of his second child, the chamberlain died. His last hours were troubled by remorse of conscience. But in vain he called for the priest to receive his confession, and administer the holy sacrament. The count allowed this faithful servant to die without spiritual consolation, and without medical aid.

"The horses were no longer used, but for walking a grass park in the immediate neighbourhood of the castle was rented, and surrounded with close wooden palings eight feet high. Every morning the count walked here for an hour. When he had returned into the castle, the errand-woman stepped out of the door, and, having advanced a few paces, stopped without turning round. After her, the deeply-veiled countess made her appearance, walking behind the errand-woman towards the door of the grass park, the latter not daring to look round. The errand-woman unlocked the door, then concealed herself behind it. As soon as the countess had entered, the errand-woman locked the door and kept watch in front of it till the countess threw up her handkerchief, whereupon the count, who watched from a window in the castle, gave a signal to the errand-woman to lead the countess back into the castle. This went on, with the same precautionary measures, for thirty years, without the errand-woman having ever seen her, or exchanged a word with her."

The countess was very fond of animals. Sometimes she was seen standing at a window feeding birds, dogs, and cats. The son of the parson tells us:—

"I only saw the countess twice altogether; only once at all distinctly, and even this was from some little distance, through a glass, although for fifteen years I lived, partly altogether and partly during my vacations, in the village. I daresay it was in 1818. The countess was standing at an open window, and feeding a cat below with pastry. She appeared to me simply lovely: a brunette, with exquisite features; a shade of melancholy seemed to cover an originally

gay disposition. At the time I saw her, she was leaning with charming grace against the window, her handsome shawl half thrown back, occupied, like a child, with the animals below. I can fancy I see her still, as she gracefully broke the pastry in small pieces and then wiped the tips of her fingers on her handkerchief.

"The count I saw several times when riding in his carriage, and once quite close. The latter occasion I shall never forget. It had gradually, by silent consent, been agreed amongst the peasants of the village, I should mention, that noise in the vicinity of the castle was to be avoided as much as possible, that the children should not play there, and that nobody should stare at the windows. This command had been enjoined upon me, too, by my father. Once, however, I ran along in play, without much thinking, even to the close vicinity of the castle. Suddenly, upon a narrow bridge which led from the castle across a brook, I beheld the mysterious one, who, upon the same bridge, came to meet me with great strides. A lad from the Riesengebirge, who suddenly beheld beside him the dread figure of Rübezahl, could not get a greater fright than I did at the sight of the unknown. I still see him in his grey felt hat, long dark surtout, and white stockings; I see his sharply-defined features, the healthy dark complexion, his coal-black hair and whiskers, the sparkling eyes, and the resolute quick step. I crouched to the railing of the bridge, drew my cap bashfully over my face, and stood motionless. The count went by, apparently without looking at me, but turned back again quickly, as if wroth, and before I had stirred from my place, he

strode past me the second time, and disappeared within the castle."

Life, meanwhile, in the castle was on a decidedly luxurious footing. All details of an elegant wardrobe, both for count and countess, and the most expensive delicacies in the way of food, were obtained from Frankfort on the Maine. The finest French wines and liqueurs were never allowed to last long in the count's cellar. After a service of hardly a fortnight, his new white silk stockings ceased for ever to do duty. Never would the count touch a book, a newspaper, a letter, that had passed through other neighbouring hands before. On one occasion he complained, "In my castle at home, upon the large marble stairs which lead to the vestibule, never an atom of dust was allowed to lie, and here I find dust even in my room!"

A variety of curious stories were related in the parsonage about the eccentricities of the castle, and the imperious whims of the count.

The count's horses were sent to livery to the farmer of the domain after the death of the chamberlain. When the farmer suddenly and unadvisedly increased his charge for them, the count sold his beautiful horses that very night to the village mayor for a third of their value.

When a costly clock, ordered by his agent in Hildburghausen, arrived from Paris later by one day than it had been promised, the count, in great anger, returned it to the agent, but enclosed the full amount of his bill.

To a village urchin he paid twenty-four kreuzers a month regularly for years because he had noticed

that the boy never stared at the windows of the castle.

The inmates of the castle were very sensitive to nightly disturbances. A cottager's dog which barked at night put the count in a fearful state of anger and excitement. Still he refused to pay the twenty-four kreuzers which the cottager asked for sending away the dog. But when the cottager on the advice of the parson, locked up the animal during the night, the count sent the happy proprietor a dollar next morning, from gratitude for his night's rest.

It was worst during New Year's night, when every Eishausen lad considered it his bounden duty to honour his sweetheart with a vigorously sustained discharge of fire-arms. The excited count had influence to summon some military from Hildburghausen. In vain! The firing from obscure nooks and corners became all the more violent. At last the parson, by reminding the peasants of all the acts of kindness shown by the count to the village and whole neighbourhood, succeeded in inducing them voluntarily to renounce the practice of firing pistols. That was done. After the first quiet New Year's night, the count put a well-filled purse at the parson's disposal, in order to give the peasants a hearty feast. He also contributed liberally towards their "kirmess." So peace was established, and the count continued to pay these gratuities to the peasants annually.

The liberality of the count was truly great. He gave a large contribution to all the benevolent institutions of the country, without, however, at any time associating his name with it. So he appeared in the

lists (on the proposal of the Hereditary Princess Amalie) always as "a gentleman known to our country only by his generous acts."

The outlay of the count was estimated at seven or eight thousand gulden annually.

Of his signature the count made a great secret. When the Duchess Charlotte of Hildburghausen, the ingenious sister of Queen Luise of Prussia, who took a keen interest in the mysterious strangers, seized the opportunity in 1810 to inform the count that the duke placed at his disposal the castle of Eishausen, and at the same time expressed her gratitude for his many benefits to the country, the count indeed replied in the most elegant and courteous manner, but so cautiously that the correspondence had to rest there once for all. Moreover the beautiful handwriting was not his; possibly that of the countess, or of the chamberlain; and as for the signature, it was quite illegible.

Later on, the Hereditary Princess Amalie addressed to the count a written request for a contribution towards the maintenance of the Hildburghausen industrial school. She received immediately at the hands of the parson ten louis-d'or, and an apology from the count for being, through indisposition, prevented from writing himself.

With parson Kühner at Eishausen the count carried on a strange correspondence for many years. At first the count sent his German, French, and English newspapers for the clergyman's perusal, drawing his special attention now and then to particular articles through the errand-woman. All were strongly Bourbon in colour. Later on the count sent verbal

messages through the errand-woman to ask the parson to procure some books for him. But when this led to various troublesome confusions, owing to the titles being in Latin, French, or English, the count wrote these titles upon a piece of paper, which the errand-woman had always to present in white kid gloves, but to bring back to the count immediately. These pieces of paper very soon grew into lengthy letters, which the errand-woman in white kid gloves had to carry across and back again daily for fifteen years, without a single line from the count's hand having been permitted to remain in the parsonage. No letter ever bore the count's signature, none a date. Upon the seal, generally a blank one, the parson thought he, on two occasions, could trace the three Bourbon lilies.

The parson's son writes as follows about this strange intercourse:—

"The two men have never spoken to one another. For fourteen years (with a single interruption) they write to each other almost daily; they conceive a friendship for one another; their intercourse becomes a necessity of their lives; not rarely something approaching an excited discussion is brought on; the errand-woman hurries with theses and anti-theses to and fro between the castle and the parsonage six to ten times on a forenoon; but even this correspondence all passes through the hands of the errand-woman, who has come from town for this purpose, a distance of over five miles. Without her agency the parson can send no communication into the castle; he dare not even address the woman when she, on her way from town, passes by his window; he has to wait till the count sends her of his own accord. He must not

transfer the commissions which the count gives him for the town, to the errand-woman who daily comes to the parsonage and the castle, but he must send an express. From their windows the two men could have seen and recognised each other by means of a glass, had they liked; but the parson has to take care not to look towards the castle. When the count drives past the parsonage in his carriage, he leans from the window, and salutes; when the parson on horseback and the count in his carriage meet on the road, they politely lift their hats to one another. Thus these men salute each other silently as strangers, and then perhaps hasten hurriedly home *to write to one another*. They never exchange a word. . . . When the Allies entered France victoriously the count had sent word to the clergyman, 'If peace is established I shall seek the pleasure of your personal acquaintance.' Peace was concluded, but the two men never spoke."

In spite of all these incomprehensible oddities, the sympathy and esteem of the clergyman for the count grew. He did not believe in the latter's guilt, but only in his misfortune. As to his irritability, the count wrote to the parson —

"Add to my natural disposition my entire seclusion from the outer world, and my sad experiences, and you will excuse my irritability."

No allusion was ever made to the "countess," in this correspondence. At most the count wrote on the occasion of the New Year *feux de joie:* "*One* of us has spent last night sleeplessly, owing to the noise in the neighbourhood of the castle, and now feels fatigued." When the parson's wife at the very first, sent, in her innocence, her girl with the most beautiful

bouquet of her garden into the castle, "with most respectful regards to her ladyship," the count ran "quite mad" about the room, and the existence of a lady in the castle was henceforth entirely ignored in the parsonage.

In the village it was said that the beautiful lady of the castle for her amusement put dogs to a carriage, and drove her beloved cats about the rooms. She had once been overheard calling the cats of the farms from her window, "puss, puss," the only words that were ever heard of her in Eishausen outside the castle. Cats are called "puss" not only in England, but in Westphalia, Hanover, and Holland.

The peasants maintained further that the lady was of the higher rank of the two, as was supposed to be plain from their respective attitudes when she walked with the count on the lawn during the first years of their stay in the castle.

Even the cook, during the twenty-six years she stayed at the castle, saw the countess only twice, and heard her speak but once. Twice she was called at night by the ring of the bell into the count's room, and found him very ill, but to her astonishment she also found the countess present bathed in tears. The count said to her —

"Cook, if I die, take care of this lady!"

During the winter of 1829-30, the cook was called again into the room of the count one night and again she found the weeping stranger present. Now she heard the first word from the mouth of her mistress—

"The gentleman has been suddenly taken ill; help me to prepare a draught for him!"

The count recovered, and afterwards praised the nursing he had received as "being beyond all praise!"

During the passage of troops, in 1814-15, once a Russian captain was quartered upon the parson, and showed a lively curiosity regarding the unknown in the castle opposite. He said that the stranger might possibly be an old acquaintance of his, and that he would pay him a visit! The clergyman only succeeded by a stratagem in hindering the Russian from forcing his way into the castle. He induced a neighbouring parson to invite the Russian to meet a party of officers at dinner. In the evening the Russian came home drunk, and next morning had to continue his march without having seen the count.

Years after this event the count once remarked—"At the time the troops were passing through there was a man here who knew my secret, and would have decided my destiny, had he seen me!"

When, in 1826, Hildburghausen fell to Meiningen, the new government officially requested the unknown occupant of the castle in Eishausen to establish his identity.

The count sent in a declaration through his law-agent in Hildburghausen that his papers were lying ready, but that if he were compelled to show them, he would immediately leave the country!

Even the offer of the reigning duke to receive the papers of the count into his own hands, to examine them and to keep their secret, the latter declined with thanks.

And strangely enough, prince and government allowed the matter to rest there, and no longer troubled the unknown (who brought much money

into the country and among the people) with such inconvenient questions for the future.

The town of Hildburghausen went even further, expresssing its unlimited confidence in his lordship, the Count Vavel de Versay, by making him an honorary burgess as an acknowledgment of the many benefits bestowed by him on town and neighbourhood.

The count responded to this mark of confidence by the purchase of three houses and gardens in and about Hildburghausen. The largest house he caused to be entirely and elegantly furnished; the garden he enlarged by the purchase of additional ground, and surrounded it by a high enclosure of palings. A new carriage was ordered from Frankfort. Thereupon the count and the countess drove with four post-horses to Hildburghausen, to inspect their new property. Having stayed a few hours in the house and garden, they returned to Eishausen. This visit to Hildburghausen was repeated a few times in summer, but the count and countess never passed a night outside the Eishausen castle.

Upon such a drive the Meiningen Privy Councillor von B. accidentally saw the countess without veil, but wearing green spectacles. He was surprised at her striking resemblance to the Royal Bourbon family.

In the same garden at Hildburghausen the countess is said to have spoken to one other person. At least the son of the above-mentioned "errand-man" and "errand-woman," who lived in the new house, boasted of it when he related afterwards: "I was busy in an obscure corner of the garden without the count's knowing it. Then suddenly the countess stepped out of an alley, was startled at first, but quickly composed

herself and said, "Dear Schmidt, I should like to speak to you, I'— Then the count ran up furiously, seized the alarmed countess by the arm, and quickly drew her away. After a second attempt on the part of the countess to speak to me, I was altogether forbidden the garden."

In February, 1827, Parson Kühner died suddenly during the night. When the knell sounded the next morning, the count did not inquire after the name of the deceased, but changed his rooms to others not facing the parsonage; and the errand-woman said tears glittered in his eyes, just as some years previously, when the count had told her that a great prince had died! Perhaps by this he meant Czar Alexander, who died in 1825, and with whom the count (as can be proved) has repeatedly come in contact.

The count at any rate deeply mourned the clergyman, to whom he had never spoken. He sent word to the widow, that with the deceased the last link was broken that had till now bound him to the world. But after a few years he began again that mysterious correspondence with the widow of the late Parson Kühner, now living in Hildburghausen, of which no written paper ever remained in the hands of the recipient; he also conferred many secret benefits through her.

In autumn, 1837, the count for the first time made mention to the clergyman's widow of the "companion of his life," full of anxiety about her fast decline. But he called no physician, no nurse, no confessor to her sick-bed.

On the 25th of November the mysterious lady was

a corpse. At midnight, by torchlight, she was conducted to the hill-garden that had been purchased in Hildburghausen, there to be buried quite quietly and obscurely. "The deceased has there sojourned with enjoyment on a few occasions; I desire to be buried one day beside her," the count had said. But he did not accompany the funeral to the grave.

On the special command of the count, the coffin according to the custom of the country, was opened at the grave. All persons present were deeply moved by the "touching beauty" of the nameless woman who, clad in white satin, now lay so still before them in the red glare of the torches.

But the people did not believe in this "visible corpse," because they had for so many years accustomed themselves to think of the invisible countess only in connection with a hundred mysteries. There soon went the saying abroad, "In that hill-garden only a beautiful wax doll was laid in the grave, the countess had left the castle by night, and gone on by special post."

Was no official inquest in existence in Meiningen at that time?

When the clergyman desired the count to furnish the necessary particulars concerning his late spouse, for the purpose of registering them in the vestry-book, he received the laconic answer: "She was not my wife; I never gave her out as such!" He refused further information. Only after the clergyman had promised to keep everything a secret till after the count's death, he received this scanty intimation,—"Sophia Botta, spinster, *bourgeoise* (not of noble birth), from Westphalia, aged fifty-eight years."

Now the ducal sheriff intervened; officers entered the rooms of the deceased, to draw up a list of her estate. They found a rich wardrobe, partly unused, dozens of the finest chemises, a catholic prayer-book, about a hundred new gold pieces, lying about in several small bags as if a child had played with them, but no letter, no paper, that could have given the least hint about the deceased's identity. And the count also refused to the authorities any information concerning her. Even when the sheriff put his seals on the property, and intimated that he should publicly invite all those who might have claims on the estate of the deceased to produce them, even when a powerful personage offered his mediation at court, even then the count's determination remained unshaken.

"No earthly power shall tear my secret from me. I take it with me to the grave. I have no favours to ask in Meiningen. My measures are taken for all emergencies, and cannot be shaken by anything!"

The count was evidently resolute and had made his preparations for departure; and, strange to say, the government again relented, and was satisfied to let the count depone at the law-court the value of the residue at 1470 gulden, deceased's property.

In his profound pain and deep excitement the count wrote to the widow of the late Parson Kühner in Hildburghausen:—

"My life becomes more and more intolerable; it is not a severed matrimonial connection, it is more, it is the tearing asunder of twins grown together; the one cannot live on without the other. The deceased's effects were yesterday heaped up, with great trouble, into one room. You may imagine that it contained

many valuable articles, relics especially of former times, silk dresses, shawls, &c., the most of which had never been used. In a little silk purse were found twenty louis-d'or, in a box, ten or twelve ducats and perhaps a couple of dozens of crown dollars. She had not had the opportunity of spending a farthing for the last thirty years; she marked her linen with pencil, nor could she write to anybody, because she had no acquaintances. I always regarded with a sort of religious awe her many chests of drawers, never touched them; I knew not how many beautiful things (forced upon her) they contained. The sealing by the sheriff has been gone through quietly. I have submitted to the laws. I lie down sometimes during the day, but in vain; gout disturbs the quiet of my body as much as the surrounding objects do my mind. The house is desolate. If no seals had been affixed, the whole residue would have been left for the benefit of the poor, with the exception of a few dozen chemises and a few robes."

Other letters to the same widow contain the following concerning the deceased :—

"She was a poor orphan who owed all she possessed to me, but has repaid all that to me a thousandfold. My union with her had something of the romantic about it, something resembling an elopement. I never was married."

Also a letter of the deceased, addressed to him, "who had saved her from great danger, and misfortune," he laid before the widow; there was no signature to it, however. The letter was written in German, with some orthographical mistakes, but overflowing with love and gratitude :—

"I know that thou, beloved Louis, gavest up much on my account, and only with my love can I repay thy thousand sacrifices!"

The count wrote in profound melancholy:—"It is really necessary first to lose a possession in order to realize its whole value! I should like to go out into the fresh open air, upon the heights of the hills; there, only there, I imagine I might be relieved." He also wrote that the two favourite cats of his partner had died of grief a few days after her death, and that the farmer's dog was sitting whining under her window, refusing all food since *she* no longer reached it to him.

His generosity doubled. To the same widow he sent rich gifts for the poor of Hildburghausen, requesting her, "Do write to me of the happiness of others, that I, lacking it myself, may be cheered by it."

A physician whom the count now sent for found him in bed, suffering mentally even more than bodily —"like a dangerously wounded lion"—but with unbroken strength of will. He seemed to feel the necessity to open up his heart. He told the physician that all his relatives had died young, that he had lived in Paris attached to an embassy, had known the Bourbons intimately, and had had intercourse with Lafayette and Benjamin Constant; also at the court of Weimar with Lieflanders and Curlanders, and with Loder in Jena at the time of Schiller. He also alluded to his journey to Vienna, to meet the Czar Alexander, in these words: "At that time the lady was already with me; I had to travel incessantly with relay-horses; I could not leave the lady, she *must*

accompany me, and nobody must suspect her presence. Imagine what embarrassment!" Then: "I wanted to send for you to attend her in her illness, but she would not hear of it; moreover she would have asked sacrifices of you. . . . Sir, you do not know what responsibility you would have incurred had I conducted you to this lady! . . . If *one* man had died somewhat sooner, I should have returned to the world. . . . You think I shall leave memoirs behind me. There will be found no papers of mine except a bill-of-fare or two."

Later on the count seemed to regret that he had been so communicative, for he wrote to the widow Kühner, "It is with me as with nuns: when they have the permission to talk, they talk too much!"

Eight years more of this sad recluse-life were in store for the unhappy man in the castle of Eishausen. In 1845 he wrote to his correspondent of many years in Hildburghausen, "My seclusion was for a long time one of necessity; latterly, however, it was voluntary!" So at the death of his partner for life he might have returned to the world had he wanted to do so.

Repeatedly he had the intention of making his will, but he would not comply with the injunctions of the court, which demanded a personal surrender of the testament. He wrote on one occasion:—

"As to my fortune, everything has been settled long ago. I have only to dispose of what little property I possess in this neighbourhood. I have relations who are very wealthy, love me tenderly, and will not claim these trifling things!"

The hill-garden in which the companion of his life was laid he made over to the family of Schmidt, to

his faithful errand-woman, with the stipulation that the garden, till ten years after his death, was not to be turned again into a pleasure-ground. He had taken young Schmidt, with his wife and two children, into the castle to attend upon him.

In the beginning of April, 1845, the count felt that he was dying. Great restlessness troubled him. Was it remorse? Was it the weight of the conscience that burdened his soul? He repeatedly complained that he could not come to a resolution. He sent for another son of the errand-woman from Hildburghausen, to take a message to the law-court, but he sent him home again without giving him any.

A few hours before his death, he said to his nurse, in perfect consciousness, "When I am dead, a public notice will appear; thereupon a lady will come, for my only male relative has lately met with an accident. Then you will see that you have been well provided for."

On the 8th of April, 1845, the stranger of Eishausen died, still and lonely as he had lived, about eighty years of age, even in death presenting a beautiful, striking appearance.

He was laid in the God's-acre at Eishausen, near the grave of his dear parson, and not, as he had desired, in the hill-garden by the side of his mysterious companion in life. The whole village followed, mourning to his grave. The grateful orphan-children of Hildburghausen sang at the grave of their benefactor.

What a great—yea, perhaps, what a terrible—secret was buried with him.

The authorities now engaged in an examination of his effects in the castle of Eishausen, and placed their

seals upon everything. His estate in real and personal property, including cash, was valued at 15,000 florins. From letters and other papers found, the following was gathered :—

The deceased's name was not Vavel de Versay, but Leonardus Cornelius van der Valck. He was baptized on the 22nd of September, 1769, in the Roman Catholic church at Amsterdam; later he became an officer in the French army, and, till 1799, Secretary to the Dutch Legation in Paris, but left for Germany with passport on the 1st of June of that year. He continued to correspond with his relatives in Amsterdam till his death.

Also a number of letters were found, written between 1798 and 1799, in Mans, and signed Angés Barthelmy née Daniels, probably addressed to the secretary of the Dutch Legation, Leonardus Cornelius van der Valck.

From these letters could be gathered that Angés Barthelmy, maiden name Daniels, came from Cologne; her brothers lived in Bonn, Zweibrücken, and Kaiserslautern. L. C. van der Valck had known and loved her before her marriage. Circumstances hindered their union. The beloved of his bosom was not happy in her marriage, and since 1794 had lived apart from her husband, an officer, in Mans, department *Maine et Loire*, watched by the family Barthelmy, in poor circumstances, but receiving aid from the lover of her youth in Paris. Her whole happiness is a lovely daughter.

For a long time L. C. van der Valck in vain implores his beloved to elope with him to Germany! She desires him to forget her, not to abandon himself

to melancholy and loneliness, and to accept a brilliant connection which offers itself to him. Only in autumn she resolves to flee with her daughter to her brothers in Germany. Here the letters conclude.

Now the conjecture suggests itself that Angés met the lover of her youth near the Rhine, and followed him later into the solitude of Ingelfingen, in order to escape from the persecutions of her jealous husband. The beautiful unknown, however, who appeared in Eishausen, was probably the charming daughter of Angés, meanwhile deceased, that "poor orphan who owed all she possessed to me, but has repaid it to me a thousandfold!"

And that man who was in Eishausen during the passage of the troops was *perhaps* the jealous Barthelmy, that "man who knew my secret, and would have decided my destiny, had he seen me."

Perhaps! Nobody has yet got beyond this *perhaps*.

In some of the chemises of the deceased, which the bereft one would not give up to the Poor Board, were found, sewn into the cambric, the three lilies of the House of Bourbon, as indeed they had been impressed too upon some letters to the parson and his widow.

Were those persons in Ingelfingen and Hildburghausen perhaps right after all, who, struck by the remarkable resemblance of the mysterious lady with the Bourbons, concluded that she was a French princess—perhaps *De Condé?*"

But enough of these "perhapses!" I, the old woman, am only moved by the thought, What demons of the heart may have raged for so many long years in that quiet castle at Eishausen, which I saw when a

young girl, full of life, till they grew dumb for ever under the cool turf of the rustling hill-garden in Hildburghausen and the quiet cemetery at Eishausen?

But I am still more moved by the thought, What a terrible resemblance has the forgotten, mysterious life of this "count" and "countess" with the dark life of another "count" and another "countess" in the solitary hill-side house on the lake of Zurich, a life of torture which nobody knows in its gloomy depths as I do.

For I am this "countess" myself.

With what pleasure I returned from Koburg to Karlsruhe in 1822, about the end of September! Had I not overcome all the scruples of my mother and the whole family? I was permitted to be an actress—to play comedy! Delicious thought!

In my innocence I did not dream what a dangerous incline the "boards" form, which were in future to become my world. A slippery incline, upon which many a frisky performer in stumbling had lost her footing, and fallen to rise no more!

Is it not a blessing for the innocent child that it can pluck flowers on the brink of an abyss, that it jumps with shouts of joy out of the window in order to catch a passing butterfly, that it triumphantly sets the house on fire in order to make a pretty little bonfire for itself?

And I a girl of fifteen, still a simple, innocent child, who looked upon the tree of knowledge just as she would upon a beautiful apple-tree which bears rich juicy fruit for us! Alas! I was not to remain much longer so childlike and simple. In the new world of stage-scenes one turns world-wise frightfully fast!

I now commenced with pleasure and diligence to educate myself for my new career. Day and night I had no other thought, no other aim than to be able to appear on the stage as soon as possible. I continued my dramatic studies with Professor Aloys Schreiber very zealously, while the retired court-comedian, Mdme. Demmer, trained me in the practical part of the profession. I committed to memory a part, which I played under the direction of my instructress.

Thus within three months I was already able to appear on the court-stage in Karlsruhe. My mother writes to her cousin Leopold in Hamburg about it on the 23rd of December, 1822:—

"Convinced of your and my dear Luise's heartfelt sympathy, I hasten to inform you of two gratifying events within two days which have made us happy and very grateful to God.

"Firstly, the day before yesterday, there arrived the news that my second nephew, Karl Stockmar, had entered as partner a very good house in Augsburg, and that he expects Louis' arrival about the middle of January. He asks no premium, and hopes that he will succeed in making a good merchant of him within two years; so that at the expiry of that time he may find a livelihood in London, where my eldest nephew, Christian, will procure him a good place. But if Louis will remain in Augsburg, Karl Stockmar promises to give him a share in the business, after some time. So he is not only provided for, but also in very good hands, and may learn a great deal. How happy that makes the heart of a mother!

"The other gratifying event will still more astonish

you. Lina yesterday made her *début* as Margarethe in Iffland's 'Hagestolzen,' and delighted the whole town. All this appears to me as a dream. Everybody here knew what a great liking Lina had for this profession, and so the house was crammed by five o'clock; hardly a place to be had, and yet it is as large as the theatre in Hamburg. She was received with much cordiality by the body of officers, who, I dare say, only wished to honour in her the daughter of a gallant comrade. This caused her a little nervousness for the first few minutes, but she soon composed herself, and now played beyond every one's expectation so well, so naturally and sweetly, that I was astonished myself. The loudest applause was accorded her, and at the conclusion of each scene there were cries of '*Brava!*' This grew into a perfect storm of enthusiasm at the end, so that one thought the house was coming down. She was not prepared for such applause, and yet she thanked the audience in a few words so prettily and simply that all were enraptured; and to-day I can hardly snatch a moment to write to you and my Luise. I received call after call to congratulate me on such a talent, for it is asserted that Lina played better than Mdme. Händel-Schütz, who also appeared lately as Margarethe here and was much appreciated. Lina played as if she had been at least ten years on the stage. All the actors, even during the rehearsals, were quite surprised at her assurance. Theatre-goers assert that such a talent would not reappear within a hundred years. As anxious as I was before, so glad am I now; for I alone know that Lina was induced to take to the stage not merely by inclina-

tion but by higher motives, which are and must remain a secret here to everybody. We are here generally believed to be in affluent circumstances. Now the whole town desires that Lina should be engaged for our stage, and even their Highnesses have expressed themselves highly satisfied, and wish to keep her here. Everybody is fond of her; the whole body of the better middle class like her and make more of her than she could fairly expect. Grand Duke Ludwig is good, in spite of all his dissipation and sensuality, and will, I am sure, never forget that her father died for his country, and that he owes us compensation for this loss. Lina waited upon him in person and requested permission to make her *début* here. He received her truly like a father. All boxes and stalls have been bespoken already for her second appearance, which is to take place four weeks hence, when she will act the part of Iffland's 'Elise Valberg.'

"But what makes me indescribably happy is the certainty that Lina, after this really unique and rapturous evening, is still quite herself—as modest and hearty as a child.—'Do you love me mother?' were the first words she uttered after our return home from the theatre.

"Lina's teacher also is quite delighted at this great first success, and maintains, that so long as Karlsruhe has had a stage there had not been so much joy and satisfaction in the theatre, although the most celebrated artists and artistes had passed over its boards.

"You may therefore ease your mind, and so may my good Luise about Lina's future. She will always and in every respect be a credit to her family; she

promises this solemnly also to you, with her kind regards. At first there were many in this place too who were opposed to Lina's becoming an actress, especially our clergymen — excepting the worthy prelate Hebel—but to-day there is but *one* voice: that it would be a sin if this talent were hindered from developing itself. You will shortly hear more of Lina. If she obtains an engagement here, she will be allowed every year to go on professional tours. When once she has attained the rank of a thorough artiste, and has played with acceptance in other places, then we shall see you again in Hamburg. Lina looks forward with great delight to this time, when she intends to give her best to your city. Write of Lina's new calling to Stetterburg as cautiously as possible, that the dear, good relatives may not be offended. My relations in Koburg all agreed to it, and expect to derive much pride and joy from her success."

Also, to my late father's sister, Frau Amtmann Karoline Wagner, in Ziegenhain, near Kassel, my mother at that period wrote a similarly joyful, overflowing letter, which I have partly communicated in "Stage-life." I merely quote here the following:—

"I gave my consent to Lina's new theatrical career only reluctantly. Also my brother and other relatives in Koburg would never have agreed to it if they had not last summer learned to know and trust her. Cousin Christian, in spite of the brilliant position he holds in the world, was yet the first to cheerfully recognize Lina's decided talent, and to induce me and the family to make the decision depend on the success of her first attempt. If Heinrich had lived to see the evening of yesterday! How proud he

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would be of his Lina! She is his very image in body and soul. I hope that your brother will still get reconciled to his artiste-niece when he has once seen Lina on the boards. Do remind the general—will you?—how often your brothers teased you by calling you 'the *comédienne*.' Now they are punished for it, for a 'Bauer' has after all appeared on a play-bill; and, if God wills, will be nothing but a credit not only to her art, but to her family. To-day Lina was frisking around me and her brothers, and said with a roguish laugh: 'Did I not always tell you, when my brothers would call me "Big-nose," that thus, and exactly thus, must a nose be for the stage if it is to tell, and this nose will turn out an honour to you yet, some day, and the papers will write of Mdlle. "Big-nose" in terms of the highest respect.' I would gladly have removed to Hamburg, but Lina did not wish it; she also declares that she will never marry. But to be independent, esteemed, and honoured, that is her aim. She, I am sure, would be Heinrich's favourite, for of all his children *she* resembles him most. She has his fair hair, his open, blue eye, his honest heart, but also his easily moved mind. Her heart is pure, and shall remain so."

Thou good, happy mother, happy is the delusion of thy purest mother's affection! "Her heart is pure and shall remain so." As if that had been in thy power! But thou knewest just as little as I did the slipperiness of the boards, which are indeed a descending slide. Only too soon our eyes were to open with a shudder.

I was sixteen years old—I was pretty, sought after, and lionized—I was the *enfant gâté* of the Karlsruhe

public—and I was a public actress! Under such circumstances it is surely but natural that love approached me—love in all its shapes—love tender and coarse, noble and vulgar—sweet, sweet love, that makes one happy and elevates one to the sky—and false love, that "vile passion," as old Sophie Schröder used to call it—that dissolute demon of the heart that poisons the character and drags body and soul into the mire.

And still I was lucky enough to pass through heaven before I became acquainted with purgatory and its consuming flames.

I was barely sixteen years old when I loved for the first time, with the fervour and ardour of a pure young heart which has not been desecrated by any ignoble thought. My heart was a bright, fragrant spring-flower, which had opened on the first kiss of the sun, before the poisonous mildew or icy hoar-frost had settled on its cup. I loved, and I *was* loved.

Among the many admirers who approached the young actress with their homage, flowers, pretty amorous looks, gallant phrases, sighs, and fopperies, there was a young Hamburger, Edmund Amberg. He had come to Karlsruhe in autumn, and had brought us greetings from cousin Luise Leopold. He was handsome and amiable, very well-bred and gentle, so very different from our Karlsruhe gentlemen. And he looked so pale and ill. It was said that his chest had suffered owing to over-study, and that he had come to our milder climate for change of air. He approached me so tenderly. I saw by his sparkling eyes how much he liked to come, and my heart flew to meet him whenever I heard his step. The word "love" had never been pronounced between us. But his flowers, songs,

every sound of his soft melodious voice spoke the language of love—his eyes beamed—the pressure of his hand in the dance at the club-assembly said, "I love thee!" And he knew that I returned his love. I had not the strength to hide this from him. And this first genuine love—the purest and loftiest of my whole life—made me richer and happier than any triumphs on the stage could afterwards.

And then came the hoar-frost in the night of May, which with one blow crushed all the gay flowers of my poor little heart, then, ah! so happy!

It was an evil evening when my mother and I accepted an invitation to a party at my colleague Amalie Neumann's.

Amalie Neumann, *née* Morstadt, was the most brilliant artiste and the most fascinating beauty of our stage. In her playful coquetry she was irresistible for old and young. When appearing in Leipzig during a professional tour, she gathered around her a perfect love-court of minnesingers and knights-errant. Her admirers founded in her honour an "Order of the Roses," and raised the celebrated one upon the shield as "Queen of the Roses." In Vienna the Neumann enthusiasts procured her gold slipper, which she had worn in the opera "Cinderella," and out of it drank the health of their idol in champagne. In Berlin even the busiest doctors paid homage to her, at their head old Heim and Gräfe; she was called there the "medicinal Venus."

Thus Heinrich Heine writes from Berlin, 7th June, 1822:—

"What shall I say of Mdme. Neumann, who charms everybody, even the critics? See what a beautiful face

can do! It is fortunate that I am short-sighted, otherwise this Circe would have changed me into a grey little animal, as she did one of my friends. This unhappy man has at present ears so long that the one crops out in the *Voss Journal*, the other in the *Spener Journal*. Some youths this lady has turned into lunatics already; one of them suffers from hydrophobia, and writes no more verse. Every one feels happy who may approach the beautiful woman. A boy from a grammar-school has fallen in love with her platonically, and has sent her a calligraphic specimen of his handwriting. Her husband is an actor too, and shone like glazed linen in 'Kabeljau and Hiebe.' I am sure the good woman must be bothered by the frequent visits of her admirers. It is said that a sick man who lived next door to her had had no peace, owing to the number of people who every moment violently opened his door to ask, 'Does Mdme. Neumann live here?' and that he at last caused to be written on his door: 'Mdme. Neumann does *not* live here!'

"The beautiful woman has even been cast in iron, and small iron medals are sold, upon which is stamped her likeness. I tell you the enthusiasm for this Neumann is epidemical here, like the cattle-plague. Whilst I write these lines I also feel its influences. I think I still hear the enthusiastic words ringing in my ears with which a man with grey hair yesterday spoke of her. You see that Homer could not depict to us the beauty of Helena more forcibly than by pointing out that even old men were enraptured at her sight. Many medical men likewise pay their court to the beautiful woman, and she is called here jocularly the 'medicinal Venus.' But need I say

so much? I am sure you will have carefully read our theatrical notices, and perceived how they seem to follow a metre, indeed I think that of the Sapphian Ode to Venus. Yes, she is a Venus, or, as an Altona merchant said, a she-Venus. Only the confounded compositor will sometimes throw a wasp-sting into the cup of Hymettian honey which the pious critic offers up to our goddess. The *Intelligenzblatt* (the title of this journal is ironical!) corrects the following typical error:—'In the notice about the performance of Mdme. Neumann in No. 63 of *Spener's Journal* of the 25th of May, read at line twenty-six, instead of very active "Minnespiel,"[1] very active "Mienenspiel."'"[2]

Ah, this very active "Minnespiel" was to cost me only too soon the hottest and bitterest tears of my life. Amalie Neumann was twenty-three years old, lately become a widow. She wore on that portentous evening deep, but most coquettish, mourning. She wore a dress of black velvet, in front very open, which contrasted very seductively with the rosy flesh of her full form and her rich golden locks. "Frau Venus," in the "Hörselberg," could not be more bewitching, more enchanting.

Poor Amberg was to experience this on that evening. "Frau Venus" threw out the meshes of her golden locks after him, allured him with the sweetest tones of her silvery voice, and kindled a hot flame in him with the mysterious fire of her wonderfully beautiful, blue forget-me-not eyes, and smiled at him with white teeth—and Tannhäuser was a prisoner, lost in the Venusberg.

[1] Love-making. [2] Mimicry.

Did she love him? No, she only grudged me "this conquest." She had uttered in the charming freedom of Karlsruhe gossip, which was of course speedily repeated to me by sympathising colleagues, "What? this young nose-wax wants to play a part too, and perhaps even compete with me! I shall show her what. . . ." And she did show me her power. I still see her eyes look down upon me with a derisive smile as they passed by poor Amberg, who was already in full flame. Perhaps she was hardly able to feel how deeply she wounded me.

I returned half-dead from that party. I was on the verge of despair with shame and woe. I had aged years that evening. The sweet dream of youth and innocence lay behind me, spoiled. I had tasted of the tree of knowledge!

My mother took me into her arms and cried with me. But then she, the world-wise, dried her tears and subjected my poor sick heart to an energetic treatment. She negotiated for my first appearance on another stage, and called forth my pride as girl and as artiste.

We drove to Mannheim for the performance. I was to appear on three evenings even as Preziosa. Here I had to gather up all my strength to pass with honours before the art-loving public of the old theatre-town of a Dalberg, an Iffland, and a Schiller. And I did pass, and recovered! In the struggle for the laurel I found myself again, and the dignity of my nature. One who could be caught so easily in the frivolous snares of a coquette was not worthy the tears of a faithful heart.

And when Amberg, soon after my return from

Mannheim, became aware of this frivolous game and awoke from his wild love-fit—when the sparrows on the roof were telling each other that the beautiful charmer had not been able to resist the golden whistle of the lustful old Grand Duke—and when poor Tannhäuser, thrust out of the Venusberg, wanted to return to me ruefully, then I had gained the strength not to allow myself to be found again by him.

Such was the first struggle of my heart! such its first victory! But how much it cost me!

How often have I since asked myself, "Why was not thy first, purest, happiest love allowed to be thy last?"

Yes, "love in all its shapes" approached me, in spite of my youthful sixteen years, because it thought to have the old-established right of looking upon a public actress as a kind of merchandize which is allotted to any purchaser who pays most.

Thus it was a hundred years ago, thus it was fifty years ago, thus it is to-day—to the shame of the merchandize, but also to the shame of the purchasers!

At that time (1823) there lived in Karlsruhe Count Friedrich Wilhelm von Bismarck, General of the Royal Würtemburg Horse and Resident Minister accredited to the Court of Baden; he was married to Princess Auguste of Nassau-Usingen. Alike famous by his deeds of valour during the wars of independence, and by his compositions as military writer, and his many other accomplishments and talents, he was undoubtedly the most considerable personage in Karlsruhe, and was only second to royalty as far as rank was concerned. He looked back upon an eventful, nay, almost adventurous life. The "Star of the

Bismarcks," which was to beam with greater brilliancy still later on, stood over him.

As far back as the time of Karl the Great (Charlemagne), the Bismarcks had come into the Mark of Brandenburg from Bohemia, and had built there the castle and burgh of Bismarck and the village of Burgstall. A branch of this chivalrous race (who as occasion offered were sometimes knight-robbers too, I daresay) had taken up its abode in Westphalia, but had gradually fallen into poverty. In Windheim there was born, in 1783, Friedrich Wilhelm von Bismarck. His father had fought in the Seven Years' War as officer of Hussars, but had been wounded so badly that he had to quit the service and live on a scanty pension. His young sons, Louis and Friedrich Wilhelm, very soon left home to seek their fortunes as soldiers abroad. Louis entered the Nassau army, and Friedrich Wilhelm, at the early age of thirteen, obtained a cornetcy in the service of Hanover, but followed his brother over to Nassau when the Hanoverian army was disbanded in 1803.

The very same summer Princess Auguste of Nassau, twenty-five years old, daughter of the reigning prince, Friedrich August, during the unrestrained court life of their little residence-town, Biebrich, found so much pleasure in the blooming and valiant Friedrich Wilhelm von Bismarck, then a youth of twenty, Lieutenant in the Guards and Groom-in-waiting at court, that, although the betrothed of Prince Ludwig Wilhelm of Hesse-Homburg, she favoured the handsome lieutenant with her love. Had not he entered the lists of the world, impelled by burning ambition to seek his fortune? And he was no less audacious than

ambitious. He did not allow this love to lie unnoticed by the roadside, although it belonged, strictly speaking, to another. The quiet groves in the lovely castle garden at Biebrich, and the cosy apartments of the princess, soon saw enough of it. It was a secret, forbidden love, not unlike that of Princess Amalie of Prussia and von Trenck, Lieutenant of the Guards at Potsdam. But Friedrich von Bismarck was more fortunate in his love and life. His love did not end in the frightful casemates of Magdeburg, nor his life on the guillotine in Paris.

In vain Louis von Bismarck, who knew the secret and the danger of this august amour, endeavoured to induce his brother to shun the neighbourhood of the princess, to go to England and to take service there in the German Legion, which was then being formed out of the whilom Hanoverian corps.

Friedrich von Bismarck remained with his lady-love, and she—the publicly announced betrothed of a prince—wrote in January, 1804, to her beloved lieutenant:—

"Dear beloved, my own friend,—I feel it more deeply and better every day that I can never live happy without thee; for that reason I often reflect—if it were a possibility—whether I shall tell my parents everything and ask of them the happiness of my life, but alas! they would then probably separate us, and I am, to be sure, betrothed! My dearly beloved, art thou sure thou knowest well how dearly I love thee? I only think of thee, the whole world is nothing to me, thou only art my happiness, my only desire. I love thee, *that* is the everlasting echo of my heart."

Soon afterwards :—

"My mother had invited to her house a great many people to-day. Some spoke of thee; they said that thou wert a good dancer, a handsome man; I was flattered, I confess, to hear thee praised, it did my heart good. Art thou not mine, my friend, my bliss? Are not most people pleased when they hear their houses, their equipages, &c., praised? and should I not be happy to hear him praised whom heaven itself has given me for my happiness? Couldst thou hear me in the stillness of the night, how I pray for thee! Couldst thou see my loving, guileless heart, how it throbs for thee!—man of my love! I know not how, but my feelings for thee are mingled with a passionate exaltation which could even make it desirable to me to die for thee, and again, with a sentiment of self-sacrificing tenderness, which might conquer even my natural jealousy, if I were once convinced that another could make thee happier than I."

And the marriage of the princess with the prince of Hesse-Homburg was to take place on the 2nd of August! In vain the unhappy princess had confessed to her mother her love for Bismarck, and had implored her to have the engagement dissolved, or at least the wedding postponed. But her mother had smiled at this early love-affair, which would find a worthy conclusion in the entry of the princess into the Landgravine Castle at Homburg. Marriage between princes, she said, was no concern of the heart, but a duty. The Prince of Homburg would not demand more of his spouse.

And so, on the evening of the 1st of August, when her princely betrothed was already present in the

castle at Biebrich, Princess Auguste took leave of her beloved Fritz with hot tears, and next day stood at the altar with the unloved Prince of Homburg.

Feast followed feast at the court of Biebrich. When the newly married prince and princess gave a brilliant fête to the whole court in the Nassau hunting castle "die Platte," on the third day after the marriage, Friedrich von Bismarck, quite quietly and without farewell to the princess, left Biebrich, and went to England to enter the German legion as officer. From Hamburg he bade adieu to his lost lady-love—a mournful tender farewell. Did he hope still? This letter Hugo von Breidbach, a friend of Bismarck, handed to the princess of Homburg, in the presence of her husband and the whole court, in a pocket-handkerchief.

Such an union could not be attended by happiness and blessing. Indeed, a few months after the wedding the princess left her husband, and returned to Biebrich. Soon afterwards she was legally divorced from him.

The princess and Bismarck now set in motion all levers to promote their union. The princess's mother at last gave her consent. But the father would not hear of this "mésalliance."

After a separation of eighteen months the lovers met again secretly in Frankfort on Maine. Then Bismarck returned to England. There he shot dead his superior officer Captain von Quernheimb, in a duel, but was acquitted at the English assizes.

In summer 1807 Friedrich von Bismarck returned to Germany and entered the Würtemburg regiment of

chevaux-légers as first lieutenant. At last the Duke of Nassau also consented to a "secret" marriage of his daughter and her lover. This marriage ceremony was performed by a friend of Bismarck, Pastor Mang, in the presence of the princess's mother, but in the absence of the prince, in the princely palace at Frankfort, on the 7th of September. The young couple spent their honeymoon in the suburbs of Frankfort, in a rented garden-cottage. Then Bismarck returned to his Würtemburg regiment.

The princess, his spouse, remained at the ducal court in Biebrich. About a year later, the young married couple saw each other again secretly for a few hours in the post-house at Sinzheim, then for a fortnight in Frankfort, shortly before Captain von Bismarch had to take the field under Napoleon against Austria, together with my poor father.

In the engagement of Ridau, on May 1st, 1809, Bismarck, whose horse was killed under him, so distinguished himself through bravery and "sang froid" that Masséna, a few days later, presented him to the Emperor Napoleon in the castle at Ens, saying —

"Voilà un jeune officier allemand qui donne beaucoup d'espérance!"

Bismarck incurred great dangers during Napoleon's campaign with Russia. But the star of his wonderful fortune remained true to him also there. At Borodino he had three horses killed under him, and only sixty-five men were left out of his regiment of chevaux-légers; Major von Bismarck was unhurt and was promoted to the lieutenant-colonelcy.

Whilst the greater part of Moscow was consumed by fire Bismarck lay dangerously ill with typhus fever

in a suburb. With difficulty he was transported to the Kremlin. Still faint to death, emaciated to a very skeleton, he too had to leave the desolate town, not to fall into the hands of the Russians. In an open cabriolet, wrapped in furs and rugs, accompanied by his faithful servants, the sick man slowly drove back on his way to Germany, through abandoned, devastated, burned villages, through the shattered remnants of an army, once so brilliant, so proud of victory. Moreover, often nothing could be had to sustain the invalid, nay, not even a piece of bread, or of horse-flesh roasted on a stick, to appease his ravenous hunger, which increased from day to day as he advanced in convalescence. Raw coffee, boiled in snow-water, was often his only, and a highly welcome, refreshment after one of these dreary rides.

In Smolensk Bismarck enjoyed the comfort of a change of clothes for the first time since he had left Moscow, and was able to sleep in a warm room upon some fresh straw. Hardly had they turned their backs upon the town when the fortifications were blown up by Marshal Ney. And soon their vehicle, urged forward by artillery-men, lay in fragments at the bottom of a hollow. In order to get on his way the suffering Bismarck, who had not strength yet to hold himself on horseback, in the piercing cold, had himself strapped on the saddle. In the midst of numerous skirmishes with the Cossacks the retreat was continued. One night, Lieutenant-Colonel von Bismarck, the husband of a princess, could find no other room in a farm-house, crowded with soldiers, than by pushing a soldier, just dead, a little aside, and resting his head upon him as on a pillow.

Colonel Friedrich von Bismarck entered Paris in the suite of the allied monarchs on the 30th of March, 1814. Only in autumn, after a separation of nearly three years, decked with orders of Würtemburg, Russia, and Austria, he was permitted to embrace again his spouse Princess Auguste.

After the conclusion of the war and Napoleon's banishment to St. Helena, the King of Würtemburg made Quartermaster-General of Cavalry von Bismarck a hereditary count—principally, I daresay, to bring him nearer the rank of his spouse. After the death of Duke Friedrich August of Nassau, the last Prince of Nassau-Usingen, their secret union was at last recognised publicly. Princess Augüste went to live with her widowed sister the Margravine Friedrich, in Karlsruhe, and Count Bismarck also found a friendly home in the Margravine palace in the Karl-Friedrich Strasse. Here the distinguished cavalry soldier began his important career as military writer, living, as he did, on leave of absence for the greater part of the year with his spouse.

In 1820 the King of Würtemburg appointed him Envoy Extraordinary and accredited Resident Minister to the Grand-Ducal Court at Baden, with the style of Major-General and Peer of Würtemburg.

As such, he, the stately man of forty, of high rank, approached me, the actress of sixteen years, with his gallant addresses. As often as I appeared on the stage he sat beside his no longer young wife, in the Margravine's box, and devoured me with his large, round, rather disagreeably prominent blue eyes. He sent me flowers, verses, sweetmeats, and perhaps also that costly set of jewels concerning which my mother

writes in the spring of 1824 to our aunt in Ziegenhain —

"What friends and patrons Lina has won already! Just fancy, at Christmas she received by post a little box containing a golden comb, also necklace and earrings set with the most beautiful amethysts, and a note in French which I enclose. We don't know from whom the present comes. Some guess that it is from the Grand-Duchess Stéphanie, from Mannheim; others, from our Margravine Friedrich. Enough, it remains a secret."

My good, innocent, unsophisticated mother! how did the very natural question not strike her —

"Où est l'homme?—where is the man, the admirer of the pretty young commédienne, who tries with this golden key to open her heart?"

I believe that Count Friedrich Wilhelm von Bismarck sent me those jewels, but secretly, that his spouse, the Princess of Nassau-Usingen, might not hear of it.

Scarcely three months after having received that costly gift at Christmas, the Stuttgart *Morgenblatt*, the leading journal, brought the following art notice from Karlsruhe —

"Short as my stay in this place has been, I must make mention of a very sweet creature its stage possesses, a very gem, such as hardly another theatre can show. I refer to Mdlle. Karoline Bauer. Every representation appears like a picture in which some leading character, that which she performs, stands out life-like and striking. The audience take a lively interest in the fate of these chief persons, which announces itself often through compassion, tears, loud

applause, and outbursts of joy. The interest of the audience is, in fact, of three kinds. First as to what the author has put into the part, then what mimic art will be able to make of the part, and lastly, joined to it is the interest which the representing individuality calls forth by peculiar position, personal charms, education, descent, unsullied reputation, domestic affairs. One cannot separate that. Through immorality and coarseness every talent loses, however great it may be. Hence the interest which Mdlle. Bauer awakens is so lively. That she is the daughter of an officer, the sister of an officer, raises the interest of this rising artiste very greatly indeed. Add to this an unsullied reputation, a rare combination of virtue, bodily charms, highly-cultured mind, sprightliness, liveliness, which not mere *fama* gives her credit for, but all of which also portrays itself in her performance.

"I saw Mdlle. Bauer in several parts, for instance, in the 'Rehbock' as Baroness. This part was a difficult one, not indeed in its general representation, but rather in its special shading. To begin with, any part of a married lady must be difficult for a gentle young maid; but when the author places this lady in indelicate positions where one equivocation follows hard upon the other, keeping the ear, so to say, in a state of siege, in so plain-spoken a manner that the audience is kept in a continuous round of laughter, then of necessity the embarrassment of the young maiden, who counts but sixteen summers, must rise the more she is carried away involuntarily in the midst of the play and the persons acting together with

her. This embarrassment was stamped on the performance of Mdlle. Bauer, but the play itself not only suffered nothing at all, but the interest in her individuality was even heightened by it. For this perplexity was not a want of confidence, of assurance, in her acting; it therefore did not strike at the art, but at the maidenly shame of the tender, sweet virgin, who finds herself placed in the midst of a sphere of equivocations foreign to her, which she does not know how to escape. This very perplexity, therefore, raised her charm, since it was, under the given conditions, so to say, a necessary complement to her acting, and could not have been missed without her maidenly delicacy suffering by it. Under this point of view the interest of the whole representation gained. The contest between her play and her inner feelings, between the outward representation and the inward state of mind, was unable to conceal itself.

"This performance is the last of my stay here. The first character in which I saw Mdlle. Bauer was that of 'Gabriele' in the 'Nachtlager von Granada.' When the beautiful young maiden appears on the scene in her inimitable grace, and yet so unassuming, bewailing the loss of her beloved dove, when at that moment the wandering Prince Regent appears, the audience consider it quite natural that the prince's astonishment at finding here, in this wilderness, so sweet a maiden is quickly transformed into the gentle feeling of love. This part the young artiste seemed to me to give with special delicacy.

"I was unable to obtain an opportunity of making the personal acquaintance of Mdlle. Bauer, for access to her is difficult; however, I thought it my duty to

direct attention to this rising and assiduous artiste, who deserves friendly encouragement."

This amiable and anonymous critic was Count Friedrich Wilhelm von Bismarck. I wonder if he read out to his Princess-spouse the text of his enthusiasm for the pretty young actress.

The critic's real intention was to become only too apparent to me soon after the publication of that notice.

One day at noon, my brother Karl, the light-headed, impulsive young lieutenant, returned home in a very excited state, hardly able to find words for that which filled his youthful heart (he was then twenty years old) with pride and rapture. He could only utter by snatches:—

"I say, Lina, something very remarkable has happened to me—which will be a great advantage to all of us. I was taking a ride just now, when I met Count General von Bismarck, likewise on horseback; he addressed me so friendlily, so cordially, as if he, too, were only a simple lieutenant with twenty gulden a month. And he praises my horse and my horsemanship, and invites me to ride along with him. And we proceed to Baiertheim, he saying to me that he had always felt a keen interest in me for the sake of my late father, whose acquaintance he had made in the Austrian campaign, and to whom I bore a striking resemblance, and that he would charge himself with my promotion. He asked whether I had any debts, and if he could assist me with his purse, all without ceremony, just as it is the custom among good fellows. But don't imagine, Lina, that I told him anything about those paltry sums I owe to Fratel, and to

Meyer-Itzig, and—but that, indeed, you don't require to be told; and take care, mother, that you don't tell; though a sum of 250 gulden or so might set me on my legs again, I dare say. And then the count also spoke of you, Lina, of your great talent, and your charming impersonation of 'Preziosa,' and of your beauty, loveliness, and virtue, and he grew quite enthusiastic over you, and he said that he loved you, and that if he had not his old woman on his hands you should be his countess, and that, if you only had confidence in him and could love him, and would wait patiently for a few years till his old dame was gone, then he would marry you, and give it you in writing even now, and make over to you his whole fortune, and he would even now provide for you as your affectionate friend, indeed for all of us, and double my pay as lieutenant for me —ah, Lina! what a prospect!"

I must not conceal that all this flattered my vanity very much. But my good angel preserved me from becoming the mistress of a married man, waiting for the death of his "old dame," in order to take her place some day.

I have still to acknowledge that Count von Bismarck ever remained to me an anxious friend and protector, though he never became my lover. Later on, when he came to Berlin in the position of envoy of Würtemburg to the Prussian court, he paid us a visit there in all courtesy and honour, and wrote many a friendly notice yet on the artiste, Lina Bauer; he also brought it about through his influence that I was allowed to remain in Berlin without incurring the penalties for breach of contract to the Karlsruhe stage, and to return to it on a starring tour.

It was twenty-three years after that declaration of love on horseback, in July, 1846, that Princess Auguste of Nassau-Usingen in Wiedbad died, the last of her race, after having been partially paralyzed for years.

Two years later Count Bismarck retired from public life and took up his residence on his beautiful estate near Constance, on the lake of the same name, where he married the lady-companion of his late consort. He died in Constance in 1860.

And strangely enough, I was to make the acquaintance of the Dowager Countess Bismarck in the most friendly way ten years afterwards: she was an amiable lady, and had a lovely daughter. The question forced itself upon me:—"Wouldst thou have been happier if thou hadst at that time waited—ignoring the dictates of conscience and heart—and as reward, become at last Countess Bismarck?"

* * * * * *

One other temptation I was subjected to in Karlsruhe when but sixteen years old. This time it proceeded from no less a personage than the reigning duke. He was full sixty by that time, had never been married, but had been the most dissolute prince of his age. The tale was told quite openly in Karlsruhe, that the Grand Duke, when Margrave, had carried on criminal intercourse with his step-mother, Countess Hochberg, *née* Geyer von Geyersberg, the morganatic wife of Grand Duke Karl Friedrich, and that the young Margrave of Hochberg was both his son and his step-brother! Did the people not speak quite without restraint of the legion of his amours and his avowed mistresses! There was the unfortunate Fräulein von

Ende, a niece of the chief groom of the chamber Von Ende, whom the latter himself had disposed of to his master, when he could not induce him to contract a morganatic union. There was the beautiful Mdlle. Werner, who was regarded in Karlsruhe as "ruling mistress," and who, as such, maintained a brilliant establishment. There was as sub-favourite the actress Mdlle. Ku. . ., who was ambitious enough to appear in Berlin in the part of 'Preziosa,' and who made a tremendous fiasco in spite of her luxuriant beauty and brilliant costume, and who subsequently married a Baden officer, having received from the Grand Duke a dowry of 40,000 florins. There was, last not least, the lovely Mdme. Amalie Neumann, my celebrated colleague, whose debts the gallant Grand Duke paid, and to whom he allowed a salary of 5,000 florins, an endowment then quite unheard of in Karlsruhe.

And now I was to be added as another to the already numerous ducal gallery of beauties! The notorious Major Hennenhofer, who had been long before the confidant of Margrave Ludwig, and whose name figures much in the Kaspar-Hauser scandal, who was strongly suspected of having connived at the mysteriously-sudden death of the two young sons of the Grand Duchess Stéphanie, who were the legitimate heirs of the Baden throne, the same Major Hennenhofer, who afterwards ended his life in madness, called upon me as official procurer of the Grand Duke Ludwig, to make me the most brilliant offers on the part of his master.

But here, too, my good angel preserved me, and disgust at the crowned old debauchee who, for all that, was fond of parading morality, of which the annexed

letter of my mother will give proof. Just in time, the dear God, who would so gladly save and help His earthly children—so long, indeed, as they wish to be saved and helped—sent me a friendly helper in need, who removed me from all these temptations and dangers in Karlsruhe.

Heinrich Bethmann, the "director" of the new Königstadt Theatre in Berlin, came to Karlsruhe in his search for artists; he saw me play and made the most enticing offers. But my contract ran for two years longer. My mother and I had to resolve with heavy heart to ask for an audience of the Duke, and for the dissolution of my contract.

In April 1824 my mother writes to my aunt in Ziegenhain:—

"The Grand Duke received us very graciously, but would not hear of a formal annulment of the contract, even for Lina's sake, he said, in order that, should our expectations in Berlin not be realized, she might return to her engagement in Karlsruhe, which he then would gladly improve so far as the finances of the theatre might permit; but that he would allow her leave of absence for eight months, to enable her to perfect herself in the representation of leading characters by the study of celebrated patterns. He was convinced that Lina would remain, even in that dangerous place, Berlin, 'a pattern of virtue.' Did she return to Karlsruhe he would charge himself with her future fortune. You may imagine, dear sister, how glad we were. It only remained to be seen whether the Berliners would be satisfied with a leave of absence of eight months. Therefore Lina wrote to Director Bethmann, and the gentleman accepted, hoping to win Lina

for a longer period by-and-by. Her leave begins from the 1st of June, and her pay in Berlin from the 15th of May. And what an advance, from 600 florins to 800 thalers!

"As Mdme. Neumann is at present engaged on a professional tour of three months, and Lina has to take her parts, we shall hardly be able to set out before the end of May. We hope to embrace you in Kassel or Marburg. We may, however, only tarry there for a few hours. We have to perform the enormous distance to Berlin in eight days, because Lina is expected to be present at the rehearsals there. You will be surprised when you see Lina again. She is now taller than me, and has, as is generally maintained here, a beautiful figure; a full, deep chest inherited from her father, and at the same time, a slender, pliant waist. Otherwise you will find the same Lina as you saw her in Ziegenhain two years ago: good, happy, natural, indefatigably diligent, the favourite of old and young. Our nobility and gentry esteem her, the whole of the middle-class are very fond of her. There is nothing stiff or vain about her. She is pure, and shall remain so. She feels very happy in her calling, and would not change places with the richest and most fashionable countess. I shall relate to you by word of mouth what prospects were held out to her by a count, but at the expense of her virtue. She will not marry, no never, always to be able to remain with me, as an independent and esteemed artiste.

"And what friends and patrons she has got already! Yesterday the Royal Mail brings from Paris a little box addressed to Lina containing a quantity of the finest satin shoes and kid gloves.

But we here believe that the giver is my nephew, Baron Christian Stockmar, because he always said to Lina in Koburg: 'Always new gloves and shoes when you appear, little cousin,' and Lina answered laughing: 'Yes, that is all very well, if only the salary would permit it!'

"We hope that our position in Berlin will now soon put us on an easy footing. You may imagine, dear sister, that the first year at the theatre brought with it more expense than income. Lina, being an officer's daughter, cannot show herself but well-dressed; and indeed she has got together already a very fair wardrobe. She wants now only a real Turkish shawl, which my nephew has promised to send us from England before we set out.

"Lina is to continue in Berlin to take lessons from the best teachers in science and art, especially in music, because she has an uncommon talent both for the piano and singing. She has indeed played and sung here at two concerts with great applause.

"In January we were in Mannheim, where Lina gave three performances and was a great success, especially as 'Preziosa.' The Grand Duchess has been heard to say that never had a play so pleased her. But Lina does render that part very beautifully, and has met with more acceptance here as 'Preziosa' than the celebrated and very beautiful Mdme. Neumann. Quite a peculiar charm of maidenly gracefulness and virgin innocence is spread over Lina's 'Preziosa,' which a delicate sense would miss in married ladies playing this part. And yet with what anxiety have I looked forward to Lina's 'Preziosa' in particular, as this character is regarded as one of the most difficult,

even for actresses who have been on the stage for years. The famous Stitch, for whom the part was written, shines in it, and our Neumann plays it everywhere. So that the anticipation was universal here that Lina could not succeed in that part after Neumann, that it was too difficult for a beginner. Even the critics, who admired Lina's 'Margarethe' so sincerely, you remember, shook their heads sceptically; and I requested Lina for my sake to put off 'Preziosa' for a few months. However Lina said very determinedly 'Mother, I *must* play "Preziosa" now, at any cost, even were I to die over it on the stage. I have asked for that character as *début*, and I should be ashamed all my life long if, from vanity and arrogance, I had presumed to undertake more than I could carry out. And how I should be laughed at and mocked, if I were to throw down my arms before the battle is even commenced; I, the daughter of a gallant soldier! Courage, mother, you must show yourself, too, a gallant soldier's wife! I have the sure feeling in me that the dear God will stand by me and help me to conquer, as indeed He has hitherto helped us so wonderfully.' And I was unable to resist her any longer. But I shall never forget the dread with which I entered the box in the evening and found the theatre crowded in every part and in great excitement. Sympathy, curiosity, malicious expectation had thus crammed the house. I sat there nearly fainting. My heart beat terribly, so painfully and loudly that I thought my neighbours must hear it. I could not get rid of the dread: Lina will make a fiasco, and she will be decried as conceited and presumptuous—she who is modesty itself. But

everything went wonderfully well. Lina played with an enthusiasm and sweetness such that I thanked God from the fulness of my heart that I had not compelled her to give up the part. Now you may fancy, dear sister, how this 'Preziosa' was extolled in Mannheim by the hot-blooded students from Heidelberg, who were present by hundreds every evening. I often thought the house would come down with their roars of cheering. But I could not help laughing when I heard between the cheering a young consequential voice in the pit say in the Swabian dialect: 'I say, John, my father gave her lessons, and I have danced with her—aye danced! She dances beautifully—away with all your Heidelberg lasses!' The voice belonged to the son of our good Professor Aloys Schreiber, whose heart grows quite warm with Lina's triumphs."

CHAPTER III.

UNDER AN EVIL STAR.

The Story of Wilhelmine Maas and Count Königsmarck.

Whenever I sang to myself that old melancholy song which Heine heard on the Rhine and embodied in his lyrics, whether young or old, my eye always moistened. It always reminded me of a poor, delicate little violet which once stood on my lifepath, and which withered and died so sadly under the raw rime of life, that fell upon the young flowercup which we call the human heart.

I refer to Wilhelmine Maas, the artiste who was once so highly esteemed by a Goethe and an Iffland, and who was my colleague in Karlsruhe, but who has long been lost out of sight and mind. No theatrical encyclopedia mentions even her name. Neither the exact year of her birth, nor of her death is known. No tombstone marks her grave. In the album of the Royal Theatre in Berlin, whose ornament Wilhelmine Maas was at one time, we find the short and sad entry: "She died, as was reported, between 1830 and 1840."

This "as was reported" indicates the tragic nature of her life. It was granted to me to look more deeply into her life and heart, and to learn to know the demons of that heart which destroyed this life, once so hopeful of happiness and confident of success. And I fear that I am the last of that by-gone, art-loving, inspired time able to speak of it with knowledge. Be it so! A twig of cypress-tree I place upon the unknown grave of the unhappy artist; be it a word of exhortation and warning to those who may live and strive like her hereafter.

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Wilhelmine Maas was a native of Berlin, born perhaps in 1786. She joined the ballet when still very young, dancing among the fairies and angels. And she was the loveliest, prettiest angel and the neatest little fairy of the theatrical world. But this hopping and springing, this spreading and stretching of her arms and legs, soon failed to satisfy her lively spirit and ambition. She also wanted to speak on the stage, for she felt that she would speak well. She called on Director Iffland, and asked from him instruction and employment as actress. Iffland made the little damsel recite something, then nodded approvingly and gave the pretty child a large bag with sweets, and now and then also some dramatic instruction in his study. Later on, when Wilhelmine had turned sixteen, but yet preserved the looks of a child, Iffland sent her to "Master" Goethe, in Weimar, who happened to be just then in need of a talented young girl, to train her for the parts of youthful lover. For he liked to let no chicken out upon his stage that he had not hatched himself.

Goethe writes in his diary of 1802.

"On the 7th of February Mdlle. Maas appeared upon our stage for the first time. Her neat figure, her graceful and natural bearing, sonorous voice; in short the entirety of her happy individuality immediately won the audience. After three *débuts*, as 'Mädchen von Mairenburg,' as 'Rosine' in 'Jurist und Bauer,' and as 'Lottchen' in 'Der deutsche Hausvater,' she was engaged, and very soon she could be counted upon in the cast for important characters."

As early as June of that year Goethe wrote for Wilhelmine Maas the charming bantering part of the nymph in his pleasing Prelude written on the occasion of the inauguration of the new theatre at Lauchstädt, "Was wir bringen." The other parts were in the hands of father Malcolmi, mother Beck, Karoline Jagemann, Amalie Malcolmi (later Wolff), and Becker, the bereaved husband of "Euphrosyne." Goethe writes thus about it:—

"On the 6th of June I went to Jena, and wrote the Prelude in about a week; the last touch it only received in Lauchstädt; the studying of the parts and rehearsals went on to the last hour. It produced a very agreeable effect, and for many years friends who saw us there would recall those highly dramatic enjoyments."

Wilhelmine Maas became Goethe's favourite pupil, after Christaine Neumann-Becker (Euphrosyne) and Amalie Malcolmi-Wolff. Only, her tiny, child-like little figure caused him much difficulty, as he could find no suitable lover for her small stature. Thus the very first year of her engagement he was greatly embarrassed when his youthful lover Vohs left, to

go to Stuttgart. The faithful stage-manager, old "Wöchner" Genast, was sent south to search for "lovers." In Nurnberg, Genast found the brilliant young "lover and hero" Ferdinand Esslair, and negotiated with him. But when he gave report to the "Master" of Esslair's imposing height, six feet, the alarmed Goethe replied to him at once in these words:—

"Look out for somebody else; I have no use for a 'lover' whose beloved only reaches up to his waist."

During the winter of 1803-1804 Wilhelmine Maas, Pius Alexander Wolff, and other favourite pupils of Goethe, went through ice and snow, once a week, to Jena, where the "Master" then sojourned, to learn from him the Elements of Euclid or A, B, C, of the histrionic art.

The Maas engaged in it with an especial pleasure. As late as 1816 Goethe wrote about her to his friend Zelter:—

"I was always well disposed towards her, by reason of her great self-possession, and her very charming recitation, for which reason I once grew very angry with her in a rehearsal for 'Tel,' because she proved, God knows why, tongue-bound."

But only too soon more serious disagreements arose between master and pupil. Wilhelmine went, with Goethe's permission, on leave to Berlin, to see her relations, in the spring of 1804. But Goethe peremptorily refused her request to be allowed to play in her native town, from fear of losing her to the Berlin stage.

But the little actress always had a determined little mind of her own. She risked the wrath of the

Weimarian theatre-thunderer, and repeatedly appeared on the Berlin stage, with such brilliant success that Iffland offered to engage her.

Zelter, who never dreamt of Goethe's strict injunction and wrath, faithfully sent the following report to his friend in Weimar:—

"Mdlle. Maas has met with much success here. I only saw her play once. Her utterance may one day be very perfect. She has happy moments and *hardiesse*; she may by-and-by be quite at home in things that most actors never learn."

The bold little damsel had to pay for her disobedience and *hardiesse* on her return home. Goethe sent her into confinement. Defiantly she demanded her immediate discharge from the Weimarian theatre, and when Goethe refused this roundly she induced Iffland to mediate. But Goethe answered the latter likewise rather harshly in a letter dated the 14th of June, 1804.

"I was just about answering your Honour's confidential letters when I heard that our friend Schiller was staying with you. I was convinced that, even without being asked, he would assure you of my ever-continuing esteem, and of my sincere confidence.

"Theatrical affairs are subject to so many vicissitudes that one must ever be prepared for changes; and although it be somewhat inconvenient for us that our actors find favourable reception upon larger and better equipped theatres, we must, to some extent, value the honour thus shown us, and at least imagine that we contribute something towards the promotion of art and artists. Besides nothing can be urged against a new engagement which begins only after the

old has terminated; at the same time I beg to state that Demoiselle Maas has requested an earlier discharge, which request, however, we can on no account grant.

"As to 'Götz von Berlichingen,' I shall inform you, as soon as it is producible. Unfortunately it does not yet quite seem to suit the stage. It is difficult to overcome an inborn defect.

"With sentiments of unchanged esteem,

"I remain

"Your Honour's very obedient servant,

"GOETHE."

Perhaps Goethe expected that Wilhelmine Maas—also a "naughty favourite of the Graces"—would meanwhile change her mind, and yet attach herself again to the Weimarian stage, and to his person.

But she did not change her mind—unfortunately for herself.

Hardly had her contract in Weimar expired when she began her new engagement in Berlin (1805); she received 780 thalers of salary and one benefit per annum; this was then considered very good pay. Had not Lemm, the actor, been engaged at 364 thalers, and young Rabenstein with only 78 thalers, but a few years previously?—and both turned out chief ornaments of the Berlin theatre.

Wilhelmine Maas made her *début* on the Berlin stage with the happiest success as "Natalie" in "Die Korsen" (1805). The clerk of the theatre, Johann Valentin Teichmann, a contemporary, writes about her in those days that I now recall:—

"She pleased much by the pure sound of her voice, and soon became the favourite of the public in her

parts of the so-called *naïve*, merry, and affectionately loving girls, as in 'Hass der Frauen,' 'Laune des Verliebten,' 'Rosen des Malesherbes,' etc. She was less fortunate as heroine, queen, or tragic lover, which may have been due greatly to her small, stout figure."

The public declared her tragic heroines to be wanting in depth and warmth of feeling and rapturous passion. Thus, when his "Wanda" was performed in Berlin (1805, Zacharias Werner requested that the part of "Ludmilla" might be given, "not to the callous Maas (charming though her utterance be), but to Mebus, though so much older."

On the other hand, "she charms in Goethe's 'Tasso,' by her tender pathos, and the clear bell-like ring of her voice," whilst Frederike Unzelmann-Bethmann, "plays unsurpassably" the part of "Leonore Sanvitala."

Old "Music-master" Zelter who, as we saw, had once so greatly praised the playing of Maas, when he believed the disciple still in favour with her master Goethe, missed no occasion afterwards to aim a few thrusts at Goethe's discarded favourite. Thus he writes to Goethe about Wilhelmine Maas as Shakespeare's "Juliet" (in April, 1812):—

"This artiste (as we call the like here) continues to be what she was, a good *réservoir*. She delivers her part without hesitation, one might say without emotion, and the spectator may form Juliet for himself."

Ah! the mischievous rime had indeed fallen already upon the sweet little violet in the night of May, and it began to wither—to die.

A gloomy demoniac passion had seized the heart, the whole life of the young artiste. Love, otherwise so blissful, became her misfortune.

In Berlin, a young Count Königsmarck had approached her with the most ardent manifestations of love; he was a scion of that ancient proud Swedish race, to which belonged the unhappy Count Philipp Christoph von Königsmarck, who loved the beautiful Electress Sophie Dorothea of Hanover, and who was murdered, on that late evening in July, 1694, in the princely castle at Hanover, by the jealous prince, later known as George I., of Great Britain. A sister of this unhappy Count was the Countess Aurora von Königsmarck, beautiful to maddening, who set so many hearts on flame, and who, even as Abbess of Quedlinburg, lived and loved so merrily, and who died so wretchedly. Voltaire called her "the most celebrated woman of two centuries."

Charles XII. of Sweden, who was never conquered by love for woman, so much dreaded Aurora's enchanting beauty that, when she went to him in the camp of Kurland, in 1702—being the bearer of a message from her lover, the Elector Prince Friederich August of Saxony, to induce him to conclude a favourable peace—he did not venture to admit her to his presence.

And the same hot, wild blood, and the infernal beauty and lovableness of that Philipp Christoph of old, and of Aurora von Königsmarck, continued to glow and to kindle in that descendant of the proud house of counts, after more than a hundred years, for the misfortune of the poor darling artiste Wilhelmine Maas, and for his own. They were not merely destined to taste "the burning delights of love," but also "love's freezing woe." Their love was a "happiness without rest," and without rest, there is no real happiness.

Count Königsmarck was so passionately in love with the charming actress that, in spite of the protest of his family, he repeatedly offered her his hand and his name. But Wilhelmine Maas was too noble and proud to wish to force herself upon a family who did not welcome the artiste as a member. Besides, she loved Count Königsmarck too sincerely to have desired to be the occasion for an estrangement between him and the members of his family and class. With a full, loving heart, she brought him the sacrifice of resignation, and became the mistress of the count, although it lay with her to become his wife.

But Count Königsmarck, who was an exalted enthusiast of art, was not content with the charming actress's love, nor with her triumphs; he wanted to see her admired also, as the greatest tragédienne of the century, by all the world.

Wilhelmine Maas, accompanied by Count Königsmarck, also came to Karlsruhe, and played with a view to engagement. I first saw her as "Sappho," and, along with the rest of the audience, looked in astonishment at this little elegant *tragédienne*. It is true every pose, every movement in the picturesque Greek drapery, was faithfully copied from the antique, but too painfully and artificially. Her enunciation was correct and melodious, her voice sonorous, although not strong enough for the great part; but the house remained cold, because this "Sappho" was cold. Her declamation, her play, lacked the touching poignancy of flaming and kindling passion, which must proceed from the heart if one is to believe in it. It was a really clever, artistic performance of a thinking and experienced actress; but

it was not an art-inspired, love-glowing old Grecian poetess, who in despair throws herself into the sea.

The divine tragic spark was absent, and without fire there is no warming flame.

In her second character, as "Octavia," in the tragedy "Kleopatra," Wilhelmine Maas pleased still less. Her short figure, and her round, soft, upturned nose, made this noble Roman lady almost incredible.

Of course, I too had heard of the strange relations of the artiste to Count Königsmarck. One does not walk with impunity under the palms of a painted theatre-sky. Curious, I looked after him when I met him in the street. He was called in Karlsruhe "Count Ahasuerus." Indeed, he was a strange, almost dismal appearance in the quiet provincial-looking streets of our Grand Ducal residence. A tall, slender, somewhat stooping form, with shaggy beard, in neglected dress, shapeless shoes, he hurried along with large steps, looking at nobody, generally fighting the air with his arms, and murmuring indistinct words. In the museum he would sit for hours, dumb and motionless, staring at the newspaper with his large wide-open eyes, or over it into vacancy, till he suddenly sprang up, and hastened into the open air without saluting anyone. He had not yet exchanged a word with anybody in the museum, nor had he made any calls. He lived quietly and retired in the hotel, and only during calling time went to see his fair friend daily.

When, after having been engaged, I had to call on the elder members of the theatre, I would at first on no account visit Mdlle. Maas; and I expressed myself sharply and sarcastically about the icy, buttoned-up

colleague and her immoral relations to Count Ahasuerus Königsmarck.

But my mother, usually so mild, rebuked me rather severely for my youthfully rash, heartless verdict.

"Child, how can you so heartlessly condemn on appearance; so rashly repeat, without reflecting, vulgar theatre and town scandal? Know you, then, what is the state of the heart that beats under this apparently icy cover? I fear that her heart has suffered much already, and still suffers keenly. Mdlle. Maas is not happy, either as artiste, or in her love for the count. This love is, I am sure, the greatest misfortune for both—an abortive flower without fruit. Both, I dare say, have long ago arrived at the melancholy conviction that in this blighted love their whole life is blighted. And is it not touching to see how faithfully they also in misfortune cling to one another; since, I fear, youth and beauty, luck and star, golden dreams of the highest artistic renown—and in these disappointments, perhaps also, golden love—have faded and died? Lina, be careful not to throw stones so rashly and heartlessly; stones, as they are found lying in the street but too readily. Who knows in what a dangerous glass-house you may yet live? Judge not, lest you be judged!"

I was ashamed of my heartlessness, asked my mother's pardon, vowing to keep my rash little tongue in better check for the future.

Then we paid our visit at Wilhelmine Maas' house. She inhabited a suite of cheerful rooms on the ground floor, not far from Mdme. Neumann.

She received us somewhat reservedly and formally,

but with the greatest courtesy, and the *bon-ton* of good society. In the room there was not a trace of the notorious so-called "artistic confusion." The actress in her grey-silken gown and the fresh, white cap, looked like a fashionable lady of rank, and so she also spoke. No theatre-scandal, no jealousy of the parts of other artists, no petty malice about colleagues, manager, or the public, appeared in her conversation.

I took little part in the conversation, for I was perfectly spell-bound by a large, lovely oil-painting which hung opposite me on the wall.

It was the "Maid of Orleans!" representing Johanna scarcely out of her teens, in the picturesque costume of a shepherdess, leaning upon her long staff against an old oak-tree. Abundant locks encircled the sweet, innocent, child-like face; her pious eyes look devoutly up to heaven, and the lovely mouth is slightly opened.

There could be nothing more charming for the eye, nothing more refreshing for the heart than this darling Johanna. A chaste spring flower, scarcely awakened to life by the kiss of the sun.

Afterwards I found the same costume on the Berlin stage: scarlet frock, a bodice of black velvet, and long, wide, white sleeves.

And this lovable Johanna, so blooming in her youth, now sat opposite me, grown pale, pining away, faded and embittered, torn from all the intoxicating early dreams of happiness and love, of everlasting sunshine and ennobling fame—an ageing, weary, weary *comédienne*.

My heart grew heavy, and my eyes were moist.

Wilhelmine Maas read in my countenance what took place in my soul. She said in a trembling voice, choked by tears —

"I presume, dear young lady, you hardly recognize the original of this Johanna? Years, and the storms of life and love leave behind them their ugly, unextinguishable traces. This picture represents the 'Maid' as a simple, guiltless shepherdess, an inspired seer, ever before her the one high aim which God Himself has set her. She is still the pure maiden, her eyes have not yet seen Lionel, her heart has not yet succumbed to earthly love, to the demons of infatuating, destructive passion."

I could have cried aloud, but my voice failed within me, when I looked into the burning, restless eyes of Count Ahasuerus, which were almost swallowing the wonderful picture on the wall. And there lay in these large blue eyes, still of bewitching beauty, an unspeakable mockery, a painful bitterness.

The count had entered by the open door of the adjoining room, and approached upon the soft carpeting without being perceived.

Wilhelmine Maas was the first to recover her presence of mind, and introduced Count Königsmarck to us, but the conversation did not revive again. The count had sunk apathetically into an armchair, only staring at the beautiful sunny picture of Johanna.

On the first favourable occasion my mother rose and took the most cordial leave of the unhappy new friend.

When we were arrived at home my mother said to me in a gentle tone —

"Well, Lina, do you still think your colleague so callous and hard as the thoughtless, indifferent multitude?"

Crying aloud, I threw myself on the breast of the best, the most affectionate of mothers, who tenderly clasped me in her arms, as if she could thus preserve me from the sad lot that had befallen this poor little violet, and from the destructive frost of the early night of May.

But that, even the most faithful, shielding love of a mother could not do!

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Wilhelmine Maas had conceived a hearty confidence in my gentle, beautiful mother, and she often gave us a short call when her heart was full of sadness to breaking. But never even the smallest complaint escaped from her lips against Count Königsmarck, and we, too, learned to esteem him in his devoted fidelity, and to pity him in his profoundest misfortune.

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When we (my mother and I), deeply moved, took leave of Wilhelmine Maas at the end of May, 1824, in order to enter on my new engagement in Berlin, she said to us with tears in her eyes —

"Remember me kindly to my dear Berliners! With consuming longing I think of that enthusiastic, innocent, golden time when I was that Johanna whom you know in the picture!"

Soon after I read with joy in the Stuttgart morning paper how a Karlsruhe correspondent eulogized Wilhelmine Maas for her systematic, well-studied play in the tragedy of "Sappho," and as "Salmonäa" in the "Maccabäern;" also for her artist's wife in the

comedy "Der Bethlehemitischen Kindermord;" the aristocratic, simple-minded fisher-girl in the "Bräutigam aus Mexico," and for her captain's wife in "Der Fremde."

Then we heard that she had given up—or lost?—her place in Karlsruhe, and that she was again wandering about the world with Count Königsmarck from stage to stage.

And then no more was heard for a long time of Wilhelmine Maas.

Then—I think it was in the beginning of 1829—an old acquaintance of ours announced herself. It was Wilhelmine Maas!

"What a pleasant surprise to see you here in Berlin!" I exclaimed joyfully, clasping my sister-artiste in my arms. "You will perform here as guest, won't you? How delighted I shall be once more to play with you, as of yore, in good old Karlsruhe! I think you will have to praise me a little as you did the tyro Linchen, who has learned so much from you. I have not been idle here, and have made progress. When are you going to appear?"

So I thoughtlessly went on chatting, without at first noticing how pale and sorrowful our visitor looked. How faded! How broken down!

Then I suddenly started and stopped, embarrassed. But Wilhelmine guessed my thoughts, and said, smiling mournfully:—

"You are right, dear mademoiselle. 'I am but the shadow of that Marie!' and 'Gone, gone by are our plays!' I came to Berlin on the advice of my old patron 'Hofrath' Henn, to seek an engagement in my native town—I feel that it will be my last on

earth. But my prayers were in vain! In vain did I offer to play the humblest parts for the smallest wage —yea, even to play comic old women! I would fain have died and been buried in my dear Berlin, where once stood 'the cradle of my fame.' Polite phrases were all I got, and I dare say it is best so! I—with a heart wounded to the death—playing 'comic old women!' The very thought is enough to drive me mad."

"And your friend? Are you now standing all alone in this world?" my mother faintly asked.

"All alone! Count Königsmarck has made his peace with his family. I myself advised him to leave me and to approach again his relations, since I felt that his love for me, being no longer fed by my successes in art, had for ever died. Unstaid and restless he wanders on through the world. At present he is in Paris."

"But you, poor, dear friend, and your love, so faithful, so true and self-denying?"

"This love of the heart God will pardon me, for it was pure and innocent! But my insatiable ambition, my thirst for fame, the criminal self-over-estimation of my talent for art—they have turned out a curse for me which will abide with me till I am laid in a lonely grave."

"And now, whither will you turn your steps? Will you not ask the king personally for an engagement? *Do* ask him. He was well disposed towards you, and he has a good, feeling heart. I shall hasten at once to see his Private Chamberlain, Timm, to ask him to intercede for you," I exclaimed, deeply moved.

"Thank you, dear mademoiselle, but Wilhelmine

Maas does not force herself upon any theatre! I understand how to want, to suffer quietly, and—to die. I intend to take up an abode in Frankfort on Maine, or in Mainz, and to give lessons in elocution till my hour strikes. I feel it is not far distant."

For a moment the old pride had flashed forth again, and she stood there erect and proud as of old. But soon after, the poor, wounded bird drooped her broken wings again in sadness.

My mother wished to offer some words of comfort, but our guest sadly shook her head.

"The heart-comforting sun of fortune has gone down for me, I myself know, for ever. Ever darker I see the cold night rising, rising without star, without hope. And he who hopes no more continues to live from habit only, without fruit-bearing hope, without the courage that struggles hard for victory. Without joy and love of fame there is no true artist. Blighted love—a blighted life!"

Deeply affected, we took leave of each other. Did we not all know that it was a farewell for life and death?

Weeping, my mother and I, holding each other in mournful embrace, looked from our window after the unhappy woman, how she walked along across the square in apparently unbroken gentility and happy confidence, but with death in her heart.

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How long Wilhelmine Maas continued to live and to suffer on earth after this I have never been able to learn. But she did live to experience the pain that the assassination in Paris of her unhappy Ahasuerus, Count Königsmarck, must have caused her.

She also lived to see that the family of Königsmarck approached the poor actress with reverence and gratitude, because she had possessed the lofty pride not to force her way into this aristocratic family, causing there confusion and perplexity. The nephew and heir of the murdered count introduced his young wife to her, when on his marriage tour, and requested her to accept from him a pension for life.

But just as Wilhelmine had once refused in pride, or lofty womanliness, to accept aid from her beloved Count Königsmarck, so she now also point-blank refused the pension offered by the family.

That wonderfully lovely picture, which represents Wilhelmine Maas in the splendour of youth and beauty, in the flush of first love and aspiring art, in the character of the "Maid of Orleans," is held in great honour by the family of the Counts of Königsmarck up to the present day, as a dear memento bound up with mournful reminiscences.

"Wilhelmine Maas died"—so the report goes—"between 1830 and 1840!"

Surely a melancholy obituary notice for a loftily designed artistic life!

And yet there were in my own glittering life dark tantalizing hours, full of self-accusation and despair, in which I have envied Wilhelmine Maas her lonely death-bed and her soon-forgotten grave.

Although I was not yet a fallen Eve, for ever driven out of paradise by the angel with the fiery sword, still I had carried on a dangerous game, with the forbidden fruits on the tree of knowledge, upon the slippery slope of theatrical life during those seventeen months.

CHAPTER IV.

WITH HIS MAJESTY.

ENGAGEMENT AT THE ROYAL THEATRE—FIRST INTERVIEW WITH THE KING—THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON—KAROLINE'S LIKENESS TO THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE—THE ROYAL THEATRE—THE KING'S "PATTING FLIRTATIONS"—HIS MAJESTY'S CARE FOR THE REPUTATIONS OF THE ACTRESSES—HIS PASSION FOR THE THEATRE—PRIVATE THEATRICALS IN THE PALACE—THE ROYAL FAMILY—THE GRAND DUKE NICHOLAS—KAROLINE ACCEPTS AN ENGAGEMENT IN ST. PETERSBURG—HER FIRST APPEARANCE A SUCCESS UNDER DIFFICULTIES—SHE RETURNS TO BERLIN—ROYAL RIDDLES—ACCIDENT TO THE KING.

WHEN I gave up the Königstadt stage in the autumn of 1824, in order to accept an engagement at the Royal Playhouse, a whisper went through the town that it was at the special request of the king, who had taken a rather deep fancy to the gay, fair actress—that Timm, his private chamberlain, and Prince Wittgenstein, who feared another and more dangerous influence upon his Majesty, had brought about this engagement through Herr von Arnim (Pitt), the substitute of Count Brühl, the intendant—who by

Spontini's influence had been set aside for some time —and through Privy Councillor von Gräfe, his agent and confidant, in order to bring me nearer the eyes and wishes of his Majesty.

What may have been at the bottom of this talk I do not know. Only so much is certain, that Friedrich Wilhelm III., on the 9th of November, 1824, before I had yet appeared on the royal stage, and even before his Majesty had yet addressed a word to me, was privately married to Countess Augusta Harrach by Bishop Eylert in the royal chapel of Charlottenburg—in the presence of the Crown Prince, the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Prince Wittgenstein, Master of the Ceremonies von Schilden, Colonel von Witzleben, Cabinet Privy Councillor Albrecht, Private Chamberlain Timm, and the bride's parents.

When this secret became known in Berlin next day surprise and astonishment were universal — yes, people believed themselves perfectly justified in being indignant at this whim of "the old gentleman!" The unknown stepmother who dared to occupy the place of a Luise was hateful. Besides, a Catholic crown princess to have also a Catholic stepmother! no, that was too bad; it was too much for the moral dignity of the Berliners. Of course, now, the king and the whole court would become Catholic; and then the country would need to follow suit! When the letter-postage was raised, new silber groschens struck, and toll demanded upon the turnpike-road to Charlottenburg, then lamentation and wrath broke forth again and again; all this was owing to the Catholic royal stepmother!

The altar candlesticks were stolen from the Catholic church of St. Hedwig. When the thieves found out that their booty was only of nickel metal, they put the candlesticks back in their places again, a few days afterwards, with a paper attached, saying: "Good gracious! Crown Princess and Princess Liegnitz; and yet no silver candlesticks in the Catholic church! That's what we call shabby."

The natural though biting wit of the Berliners, easily moved and ever ready, was quite inexhaustible in remarks about the "stepmother" and the "queen of the night" who was only *princess* by day.

So again it was said that the troops no longer cheered with a "Hurrah" when they greeted the king, but with "Harrach!"

It was further said that the princes, and especially the crown prince, were indignant at this step-mother, and that the princesses, namely the daughter of the king (accidently present at that time), Alexandra-Charlotte of Russia, Alexandrine of Mecklenburg, and Princess Luise, who was betrothed to Prince Friedrich of the Netherlands, as well as the Crown Princess Elizabeth, never ceased crying; nay, that Prince Karl had been ordered into a two days' confinement by his father, for having insultingly treated the "stepmother."

Nobody believed very much in the "Bohemian gem" which the king was said to have added to his crown. It was sarcastically hinted that the Bohemian glass-blowers were very skilful.

Yes, perhaps the court and the Berliners would have given the preference even to the little actress, Mdlle. Karoline Bauer, as royal friend, instead of

Mdme. la Princesse Liegnitz in her awkward position as morganatic royal spouse, which nobody could altogether realize.

My first meeting with the king took place at one of the so-called Brühl balls, in the concert-hall of the play-house, soon after his second marriage. These festivities were so-called because the intendant, Count Brühl, arranged them and issued the subscription invitations for them. I wrote about them to my brother Louis at that time :—

"I have also got a *sight* of the Count Brühl subscription-balls in the concert-hall of the play-house, for there is hardly any dancing. People converse, observe, pass in review, and envy each other's toilettes. The gentlemen move about in the hall, the ladies sit mostly upon raised seats along the walls. The king walks untiringly through the crowd, and speaks affably to everybody. At the same time he looks around him, smiling like a father who is pleased to see his children enjoy themselves. I sat quite modestly, along with my mother and a family of our acquaintance, enjoying the glittering crowd, when I suddenly heard a whisper: 'The king wants to speak to you, come down;' and I stood for the first time before Friedrich Wihelm 'the Affable.'

"I felt that all present were watching how I might behave; my eyes were swimming, but scarcely did I meet the mild, affable look of the king than I became composed. The king said in his well-known fragmentary manner. 'Am glad Brühl gained you over for my theatre—often seen you in the Königstadt theatre—received much pleasure—like gay ways—pleased me very much.'

"'Your Majesty makes me very happy.'

"'When appear?'

"'At the beginning of January, sire.'

"'What pieces?'

"'Beschämte Eifersucht;' 'Jurist und Bauer.'

"'Good; like comedies—much success!'

"Then the king nodded kindly and passed on.

"Hofrath Henn (Clauren) offered me his arm to conduct me back to my place; but I only got to it with great difficulty. Everybody wanted to be introduced to me—to examine me—to speak to me."

At this ball Princess Liegnitz appeared for the first time in her new dignity before the Berlin public. And how she was stared at and criticized!

I think I see her still before me in her private box, as if it had been but yesterday, dressed in azure tulle, upon her dark tresses a turban of white crape with marabout plumes. She was no beauty, but she looked fresh and blooming.

She sat there intimidated and shy, as if she did not know what to do with herself and the public. The king appeared only for a few moments in the box of his spouse, and conversed with her without seating himself. Also he, it was plain, was not yet perfectly at home in his new part.

The king liked to see the principal members of the opera, of the drama, and of the ballet, at these Brühl balls in the concert-hall, and at the larger subscription-balls in the opera-house, and was especially pleased when the dancing was animated. The younger members were, one might say, *commanded* to attend the masked balls. They received the most brilliant

costumes from the wardrobe of the royal theatres, and, if desired, also a dancing fee for the evening.

To some young officers, who stood looking at the dance as if bored, the king said sharply, "Why not dancing? Are you of wood? Then better stay at home."

One of these brilliant subscription-balls in February, 1826, was to be of somewhat greater consequence to me. Mdme. Brede, actress to the court of Würtemburg, and a friend of Rahel, a celebrated beauty, had joined us (my mother and me).

She drew all eyes upon her in her charming costume; a white satin dress, a garland of roses wound around her delicate classic head! I wore white tulle over rose-coloured satin, and orange-blossoms, and likewise thought myself rather nice and pretty.

Then the king approached on his first round, attended by a large suite. At his side walked an illustrious English officer, in scarlet uniform resplendent with gold, with a mighty aquiline nose, the Duke of Wellington, the famous hero of the War of Independence.

The public respectfully stepped back on both sides. The king nodded to me with a gracious smile as if he would say, "Ah, you have dressed yourself up very prettily!" I also noticed how the king pointed us out to the duke (Augusta Brede and me).

The duke looked at us at first very placidly, but then started, and gazing at me very searchingly, whispered a word to the king; he too stopped and fixed his eyes upon me in astonishment; and I could

see repeatedly this evening that I was an object of very special attention both for his Majesty and his great English guest.

A young officer from the king's suite, who afterwards engaged me to dance, at last satisfied my burning curiosity. He had heard quite distinctly how Wellington whispered to the king in French, "What a remarkable likeness to our late Princess Charlotte of England, the wife of Prince Leopold of Koburg!"

We shall soon see how portentous this likeness was to turn out for me!

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I was repeatedly distinguished by his Majesty in the kindest manner, since, in my quality of court-actress, I belonged to the chosen few who were allowed to play in the small performances at the "Palais," which took place quite *en famille*, once a week.

This "Palais," in which comedy was played before the court, was known as the palace of the princesses, but was connected with the king's own palace by an archway across the Oberwallstrasse. It had belonged to the Margrave Heinrich von Schwedt, and had been joined to the former crown prince's palace by an arch, when the happy brothers, the inseparable "Castor and Pollux" of Prussia, came to occupy the palace. I mean Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm and Prince Louis, with their new happiness, the sweet sisters Luise and Friedericke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. After the death of Prince Louis and Queen Luise, the little palace became the residence of the daughters of the king, the Princesses Charlotte,

Alexandrine, and Luise, and thus was called by the people, and soon after by the court too, "the princesses' palace." When the princesses were married to Russia, Mecklenburg, and the Netherlands, the Princess Liegnitz went to live in the upper storey, whilst downstairs, on the ground-floor, there lived Prince Albrecht until his marriage with the unhappy Princess Marianne of the Netherlands.

In this palace the king, a great admirer of the theatre, had caused a small stage to be erected, upon which comedies were played almost every Monday, unless the king was absent from Berlin, and at other times also when there were august visitors staying at court.

The king went to some theatre every evening, summer and winter, if not unavoidably prevented. As the clock struck six he entered his small side-box to the right hand of the stage, and before the door of his box had yet stopped creaking the conductor gave the signal for the commencement of the overture or the lively introduction to a comedy or farce. Even in summer, when the king stayed in Potsdam, in the Pfaueninsel, in Paretz, or Charlottenburg, and the most beautiful weather invited to the open air, a minute before six o'clock his well-known, much mended yellow caleche, with the two snorting Prakelm horses, stopped before the theatre. The king did not fear twelve to sixteen miles of dusty causeway, in order to enjoy anew in Berlin some comedy, or farce, by no means always ingenious, and which he had seen dozens of times before. Also, during his regular, periodical sojourn in the watering-place of Peplitz, the king was never absent from the hot, stuffy little theatre, and

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often a very moderate wandering troupe had to play before him their stale farces, when the king never left till the curtain fell for the last time, to the great weariness of his suite.

Only on festive occasions, or when there were distinguished strangers present, the king appeared in full uniform, with cocked hat, in the central royal box. But, as a rule, only during the first act. Then he exchanged the tight uniform for his comfortable, long, grey undress surtout without epaulettes or orders, and cosily leaned back in the corner of his small side-box, where he was hidden from the public eye. The august prince did not like to be bored. But we upon the stage could watch him all the while, as he sat there apparently rather indifferent to the acting.

During the entr'actes the king frequently stepped through a secret door on to the stage, inspected the new decorations, machinery, and costumes, and addressed kindly words to the actors. He had given a positive order that not the slightest regard was to be paid to him on the stage. "All to take its proper course," he would say. The rising of the curtain was not to be delayed a minute on his account. "Make no fuss about me! Dreadful!"

This led to an absurd accident once. His Majesty had stayed too long upon the stage. The curtain rose, and the astonished audience only saw the rapidly withdrawing august legs in military dress.

On another occasion the king sat upon a flying-machine, which at the conclusion of the ballet that had just been finished had served for the elevation of some fairy queen or goddess upon the stage, and was engaged in a pleasant talk with the solo dancer

Lemière, when, of a sudden, the royal seat was seen to be rising again to the cloudy theatrical sky. His Majesty was only saved this involuntary aerial expedition through the prompt action of the stage-master.

Twice a week Mdlle. Lemière had to present herself to the Princess Liegnitz to give her lessons in French conversation and advice as to her toilette. The king was generally present on these occasions, but took small part in the conversation.

The Lemière also furnished the toilettes of the Princess Liegnitz and the royal princesses, according to the *Journal des Modes* of her brother in Paris, and made much money by it. She had likewise a share in the French theatrical enterprises in Berlin. By the king's command she also engaged the Parisian dramatic company that played every winter in the Saloon of the Royal Play-house.

In spite of this openly pronounced liking for Mdlle. Lemière on the part of his Majesty, and despite her great influence upon him, he never had any amorous intrigue with the bold dancer, or with any other artiste, nay, very likely, no impure love affairs at all. At least so his private chamberlain Timm asserted, adding, "His Majesty is far too shy for such a thing, and the remembrance of his never-to-be-forgotten Luise prevents that." After the king's death Luise's likeness was found in a secret case of the order of the Black Eagle which the august sovereign wore upon his breast. The queen's rooms were kept in the same state as they were during her lifetime. In her sleeping-room there lay, beside her golden dressing-table, the Bible.

The people of Berlin used to call these royal amours

with the ladies of the theatre, "his Majesty's patting flirtations," because the king, at most, took the liberty of patting a beautiful cheek, a round shoulder, or a full arm. Those who had tact enough to get nicely patted, to make amorous eyes, and to talk plausibly, received beautiful presents. Henriette Sontag was one of these favourites. I cannot boast of any particular royal *cadeaux*, although the king was always well disposed towards me.

Once, when Timm was distributing the royal Christmas-boxes, I received a fine set of black lace, but by mistake, because it was intended for a dancer; on another occasion a Parisian hat, and now and then a little basket of hot-house fruit.

The Lemière lost a great deal of her influence with the king, owing to her altogether mad passion for the handsome harp-player Desargus, a countryman of hers. She married her lover, in spite of the warnings of the king, and had to pay dearly for her infatuation. Desargus was a gambler; he soon treated his unloved wife so badly that a separation took place. Years afterwards I again met Mdme. Lemière-Desargus in Baden-Baden, as a very elegant lady. She died, however, in poverty, at Paris, during the late Franco-German war.

There was a good deal of malicious talk at times about these "virtuous *danseuses*" and good "papa" Timm as "Chief Eunuch of this strange harem," but his Majesty was in perfect earnest with regard to the virtue of his stage-artistes. Whenever a new engagement was thought of he would at once ask, "What about her reputation?" If the answer was unfavourable his orders were,—

"Sorry for it.—Pleased me well otherwise.—But must go.—Can't make use of her.—Such things infectious."

And the king was even anxious to *protect* the reputation of his artists.

Thus at a ball in Peplitz the king saw the Duke of Brunswick, then still on the throne, dancing repeatedly and passionately with an actress who was both beautiful and virtuous, and also otherwise courting her in a very marked way.

At last the king beckoned the young lady to approach him, and then whispered to her, "No dancing any more with the duke. He is a *mauvais sujet.*—Intentions not honest.—Hurts reputation. And a good name costlier than much fine gold. Follow my advice, my dear young lady."

In other respects, too, the king had a real paternal regard for the weal of his stage-artists. Here he indeed merited the name of "The Just!"

The king always showed, by his respectful and gentlemanly behaviour, that he valued the woman higher in us than the artiste. He was never too exalted, or too far distant, to protect his dear comedians from the caprices of the public or the spite of partial critics, nay, even from the arbitrariness of their superiors. For Henriette Sontag, who felt deeply mortified at Rellstab's pamphlet, "Henriette, the Beautiful Singer," and at Saphir's satirical attacks in the *Schnellpost,* the king struck in personally and energetically. Rellstab was sent to Spandau, there to be confined in a fortress; and a sharp royal mandate was issued against Saphir to this effect:—"Art-criticism permitted; personalities forbidden."

And when I myself was compelled to invoke his Majesty's protection from a prince of his own royal house, that protection was not denied me, and his favour remained the same, as I shall relate more minutely by-and-by.

When it was necessary to assist an artist in trouble, owing to sickness or sorrow, Friedrich Wilhelm der Gute had always an open heart and an open purse.

His munificence alone enabled poor Pius Alexander Wolff to undertake the annual journeys to the watering-places which were so necessary for his throat affection; and, that Wolff might not have to travel alone, his wife also received not only leave of absence for eight months, but the travelling expenses which would enable her to accompany the invalid to Italy.

And how often did the king pay Ludwig Devrient's debts? Unzelmann's? Wauer's? In order to provide also for the old age of these incorrigibly bad managers he caused their contracts to be made out *for life*.

Wauer, in his old age, liked to tell how the king concerned himself most scrupulously about the smallest details.

In Kotzebue's comedy, "Die Pagenstreiche," Wauer, in the scene where in the character of "Herr von Brennessel" he has to run his head through a door, struck against a beam so unfortunately that he fell down senseless. The king sent frequently to inquire after his state, insisting that "if Wauer felt unwell he was on no account to play 'Pachter Feldkümmel aus Tippelskirchen' in Charlottenburg until quite re-

covered, and that the performance was rather to be given up, although his Majesty had expected much pleasure from it.

Wauer played, however, in spite of his sore head. In the scene where "Pachter Feldkümmel" has to make a monstrous meal, the much-concerned king sent his adjutant behind the scenes to call out to the enforced gormandizer "not, for goodness' sake, to eat so much; considering the state of his health it might kill him; that his Majesty was very nervous about him; he was to stop eating though the whole play should suffer by it." Only the assurance that Wauer was not swallowing meat, but only a sort of light custard coloured with claret, pacified the king's mind.

When Raupach's "Vor hundert Jahren" was to be given for the first time, the king took the most active interest in the uniform and drill of the old soldiers of a hundred years ago. The king's *aide-de-camp*, von Thümen, had to drill the actors and supernumeraries personally according to the drill, not of the day, but of the time of King Friedrich Wilhelm I. Wauer, as Corporal Sturm, created great enthusiasm in the drill-scene:—"One-and-twenty; two-and-twenty!—Mohrentausend donnerwetter![1] Seibold, do you hear? Hold up your head! One-and-twenty; two-and-twenty!"—and the king never grew tired of seeing the piece, however often it was performed.

Later, when the court painter, Franz Krüger, by his Majesty's command, painted his great canvas, "Grand Parade in Berlin," intended as a present for

[1] An untranslatable humorous oath.

the Emperor of Russia, the king himself selected the best-known personages of Berlin, to the number of more than a hundred, whose portraits were to appear in the picture, and among them was the actor Wauer.

The king also took a lively interest in the mounting of the "Militairbefehl," he himself dictating the costumes and other requisites. Before its performance in the palace the *aide-de-camp* had to inspect everything with the utmost minuteness. The latter put Wauer's military hat into a different position. Then the king himself came to the stage, patted Wauer on the cheek, and said —

"Well, my old Wauer? Very good, first rate! Anticipate a special enjoyment of your performance as 'Bernhardt.' But your hat sits wrong. Come here, thus, thus it must sit!" In so saying the king put old Wauer's hat back again to its original position.

These are small traits, but they are illustrative of the passion Friedrich Wilhelm III. had for the theatre.

Concerning this passion for stage matters, to-day almost incomprehensible, of the good, virtuous king much has been said, written, printed, and guessed. About it and against it appeared several pious brochures, such as Tholuck's "Voice against the Theatrical Mania," which, though it did not name the king, most unmistakably meant him. The burning of the play-house, in 1817, was represented point-blank as a just punishment of heaven, because this house of sin stood between two churches.

The king also received many a pious letter in

which heaven and hell were held out to him. He would damage his soul if he continued to give his people the ruinous example of spending evening after evening in the theatre.

In vain. The timid, strictly orthodox monarch, who otherwise was so very much concerned about his good reputation, paid not the slightest attention to these prayers and warnings from the heart of his people; he did not merely cause the play-house to be rebuilt between the two churches upon the Gensdarmenmarkt —the "devil between the two angels"—but he himself went, as before, night after night into it.

To solve this psychological riddle the faithful of the king's retinue have taken great pains—thus Bishop Eylert, Theatre Intendant Count Redern, Prince Witgenstein, General von Witzleben, and my old colleague, Louis Schneider, afterwards *Hofrath* and reader to the king.

Thus Count Redern writes with well-meant zeal:—

"Considering the reserved character of the king, and his peculiarity of only having intercourse with few persons, the theatre was a welcome occasion for him to come into close contact with the conditions of life and the requirements of the time. What it was not permitted to say, or to write, to him personally he here heard in unfettered freedom. On that ground he favoured especially modern productions, and with them the dramatic authors of his time. Thus, gradually there appeared on the Berlin court stage all great representative talents, so that the combined impression of the performance must have been rare and grand. The king wanted to treat his good people of Berlin to theatrical feasts, and therefore would not

listen to any paltry economy that might detract from the increasing success of the whole; for all that he insisted on economical management, so that the supplementary sums from the royal purse rarely exceeded the original allowance."

The explanation of Prince Wittgenstein sounds more natural, I think. Once, being wearied during the performance (I don't know how often repeated) of "The Friend in Need," a piece of no special merit, he said,—

"Your Majesty, I cannot enjoy a representation, every word of which I know before the actor has spoken it."

Whereupon the king replied with a smile,—

"Do you believe, I ask you, that *I* find pleasure in it? I only go to the theatre because there I can think without being disturbed, and recall what important things may have taken place during the day: I ponder, muse, and reflect. Here I do not need to listen to the speaking; all other speeches are either addressed to me, or at least said with the intention that I may hear them. Wherever I may be, I am at once seized upon. Here I am not lonely, and yet am alone with myself; here people want nothing from me."

That certainly is partly correct, but only partly. For this loneliness and repose in the Berlin theatre would surely be bought somewhat dearly by a drive of several hours from Potsdam to Berlin and back again. Moreover, when walking in his gardens nothing obliged the king to speak, or to hear either, if he did not wish to do so; and surely he could think without being disturbed about state-business better in the quiet verdure of the "Pfaueninsel," or the privacy

of his study, than in the noisy theatre. I believe the solution of this psychological riddle to be far simpler and to be much nearer. I am convinced it is this:—

The king went to the theatre night after night from habit and from *ennui.*

The saying here is not "Le roi s'amuse," but "Le roi s'ennuie."

* * * * * *

We always regarded it as a special pleasure and honour to be commanded by his Majesty to take part in the small private theatricals in the palace, or in Potsdam; for nobody was admitted to this select circle of artists who was in any way compromised, or personally distasteful to the king. The king always perused the list of the plays proposed, and of the performers, and scored out what and whom he did not relish, even at the risk of damaging the performance by so doing. Thus I do not remember that Mdme. Stitch ever played again in the palace after her "Stitch-Stitch-affaire" with young Count Gebhard von Blücher.

It was deemed a still greater proof of his Majesty's favour when the august sovereign addressed us at the rehearsal, during the pauses, or after the performance.

It is among my most pleasant reminiscences that in 1827, at the special desire of the king, I was allowed to play and to sing in the part of Edile in Thouard's comic opera "Joconde," along with Henriette Sontag. The singer who had studied this part had been taken ill, and, the king having distinguished visitors, Sontag was to appear before them. In the short time available no substitute could be found; for no prima donna

such as Milder-Hauptmann, Seidler, and Schultz-Killitschgy could be expected to serve as a foil beside Henriette Sontag.

Accordingly, the chief manager of the stage, Karl Blum, came up to me in great haste with a message from the intendant and conductor: "You must help us out of our dilemma. You must sing the part of Edile. Their Highnesses are pleased to hear Sontag and Bauer in 'Joconde.' You have musical talent, I am sure you will do. Your 'Edwin' was first-rate. I think we'd better begin at once," and Blum opened the grand piano, pressed the music into my hands, and began the accompaniment.

"I!" cried I, very excitedly, "I to sing with Sontag before the court! My head goes round at the very thought of it; and, besides, to study the part at lightning speed!—to make a fiasco!—to stick fast!—rather die!"

But Blum was so persistent in his solicitation, and tried to allay my scruples by assuring me that the court would be informed that I had only from a sense of obligation ventured to sing beside Sontag. "Joconde" would not be repeated in Berlin, as I knew. And at intervals he played fragments of the sweet, enticing melodies which Edile has to sing. I was conquered, and got up the part at the risk of my life. The rehearsals went well; but during the chief rehearsal in the new palace I stood there trembling and nervous, for the king with his whole suite was present, sitting close behind the orchestra.

After the first trio, and at the end of the first act, Friedrich Wilhelm der Gute suddenly stood before me, and said in his mild, paternal way, "Don't be nervous

—of course I know—sing only from obligingness—very pretty—creditable—will do very well—thanks, many thanks." So saying, the affable monarch nodded in the friendliest way, and was gone. This revived my courage. I breathed more freely, sang and played more boldly, and even in the evening did not make a fiasco. Next day I received from the king, at the hands of his private chamberlain, delicious hot-house Potsdam grapes and a charming hat from Paris. This present, almost the only one I ever received from the Prussian court, pleased me on account of the accompanying billet: "Edile is desired to think with pleasure of the sacrifice she was good enough to make."

The summer festivals in the new palace generally filled up the whole time of the king pleasantly for the day. In the morning he was present at the rehearsals, and chatted with the actors. Then followed a grand court dinner in the cool grotto-hall, performance in the small theatre of Frederic the Great, finally supper. The road through the park of Sans Souci was illuminated by torches for the return drive of the guests.

On the other hand, a few chosen guests, the dancers Lemière, Hoguet, Galster, Gasperini, and of the opera and drama only Henriette Sontag and I were invited to the private *dîners*, which "Papa" Timm had to give in the Stadtschloss at Potsdam, at the same time and of the same dishes as at the royal table. When the cloth was removed the king appeared for a homely chat, but without sitting down. He leant in easy attitude against a table or some piece of furniture while we surrouded his Majesty in a semi-circle, wait-

ing to be addressed. The king liked to hear us chat away among ourselves without ceremony.

Thus, on one occasion the sovereign, smiling, said to me, threatening with his finger:—

"Take care, madam,—ruin my lieutenants—have heard a little bird twitter. What about the pipe?"

I had to reply, "Indeed, your Majesty, why are your lieutenants so crazy? The young madcap who paid ten thalers to the property-man for the pipe from which I had to smoke during the last performance in the Potsdam Stadttheater has, I am sure, too many mother's pence. If I were his mamma, I should put my thumb a little more tightly upon my purse-strings. And the pipe did not even smoke well."

In this manner the conversation was carried on, old and new stage scandal, with and without the "cloak," came upon the carpet, till it was high time to dress for the theatre. The king went away; "Papa" Timm quickly put into our hands great paper bags full of the remaining dessert, and we sped gaily across the wide drill-ground to the theatre.

The king, though past fifty-five, was still stately and handsome of person, full of dignity and gentleness; he approached us several times with a friendly word concerning the theatrical performance of the evening. Also the two brothers of Queen Louise, the gentle, kind Grand Duke Georg of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Duke Karl, the ingenious *maître des plaisirs* of the court, favoured us regularly with some mostly jocular words.

Their sister Friederike, the Duchess of Cumberland, a princess, even then, not without charms—of whose gallantries and passions Berlin had so many piquant

stories to tell—always had on her lips for us a cheerful little chat.

But I was almost startled at the lion-head and the suffering eyes of her spouse, the Duke of Cumberland, afterwards King of Hanover, when he approached me so closely that our noses almost touched, and said with his English accent —

"Miss, charmante ausgesähn als Bedduinin—sähr glücklicher Bedduine!"[1]

Prince Wilhelm, the king's brother, a handsome chivalrous-looking personage, with whom at the Congress of Vienna so many ladies fell in love, to their misfortune, passed us by coldly; it was said, from bashfulness.

The youngest brother, Prince Heinrich, was not so timid, and lived in Italy with his evil passions, in a kind of banishment, and almost forgotten.

Princess Wilhelm was very much honoured and respected by the king. She was tall and thin, but from her strict views of religion no particular friend of comedy and comedians; yet, from her eyes shone great kindness of heart.

The king's sisters, Wilhelmine, Queen of Holland, and the unhappy Electress Augusta of Hesse-Kassel, who had so much to suffer at the hands of Countess Reichenbach, the "black Marthe," the ruling mistress of her husband, that she withdrew to Bonn with her son the Electoral Prince; these stately, kind princesses were often on visits in Berlin and Potsdam.

The Electoral Prince of Hesse, a dapper young

[1] The accent is less English than affected. The words mean, "You looked charming as an Arab girl. How I envied the Bedouin!"

gentleman, slender, with pretty, gentle features, once invited me to give performances in Kassel. But I was obliged to reply that General Bauer, in Kassel, did not wish to see his niece upon the boards.

Soon afterwards there was a rumour of this handsome, quiet prince having fallen desperately in love with the wife of Lieutenant Lehmann in Bonn, who afterwards left her husband to become Princess Hanau.

Thus the poor Electress Augusta had the dismal fate of not only being carried back from Bonn to Kassel, by a sudden raid on the part of her husband, and there to endure at her side an all-powerful favourite, Countess Reichenbach, *née* Ortlepp, but had also the mortification of being forced to recognise as her morganatic daughter-in-law a Princess Hanau, the divorced wife of Lieutenant Lehmann.

Who that at that period, during the Berlin court festivities, had seen these cousins, the Electoral Prince of Hesse, the little Prince George of Cumberland, and the king's sons, carry on such friendly intercourse and fun—who, I say, would then have ventured to prophesy that one day, forty years later, these happy cousins, as reigning princes, would be facing each other in hostile array, sword in hand?—and that Elector Friedrich Wilhelm of Hesse-Kassel and King Georg of Hanover would live and die far from their overturned thrones—in exile?

Yea, the stage does not offer more affecting dramas than those furnished by real life.

And again, at these select court *fêtes* of Fredrich Wilhelm III., the beautiful children of the King of Prussia, as Heine justly calls them, really, what a charming sight! Truly, a beautiful, vigorous race of

princes. There was no misshapen branch on that stem.

When I for the first time played in the palace, the Grand Duchess Alexandra was then staying on a lengthened visit at her father's court; delicate, and yet royal in appearance, capable of being charmingly amiable when she liked. She asked me, whether I had no intention of playing in St. Petersburg, as she would be happy to see me there again.

This friendly invitation I complied with in the spring of 1828. Empress Alexandra received me as kindly in St. Petersburg as the Grand Duchess had done in Berlin.

It was related that Princess Charlotte of Prussia had had a deep early affection for the handsome General von Natzmer, and had written a letter asking her father's consent to her marriage with the general; but her lady-in-waiting had succeeded in intercepting the letter, which never reached the king. Thus Princess Charlotte did not change her name for that of General Natzmer, but for that of Alexandra, Empress of all the Russias.

The Grand Duke Nicholas was the handsomest man I ever saw. Cousin Christian Stockmar draws the following characteristic sketch of the Grand Duke, who was just twenty years old when he was on a visit to Prince Leopold and Princess Charlotte of England at Claremont, in 1816, and this sketch was fairly accurate, even ten years later.

In Christian Stockmar's diary we read, November, 1816:—

"Nicholas is an unusually handsome, seductive lad; taller than Leopold, without being thin, grown straight

as a fir-tree. His face, youthful like his whole appearance, exceedingly regular, a fine free forehead, beautiful arched eyebrows, an extremely beautiful nose, beautiful small mouth, and finely-cut chin. He sports the rudiments of mustachios and an imperial, wears the uniform of the light horse, quite simple green tunic with red, silver colonel's epaulettes, a small faded star, a white sword-belt, and a steel sabre with leather sword knot. His behaviour is lively without embarrassment or stiffness, and yet very becoming. He speaks French fluently and excellently, accompanying his words by suitable gestures. Although everything he said may not have been precisely clever, everything was, at least, courteous and agreeable; he also seems to have a decided talent for love-making. If he wishes specially to emphasize anything in his talk, he shrugs his shoulders and casts his eyes to heaven somewhat affectedly. In everything he shows the greatest confidence in himself, yet apparently without arrogance.

"He did not pay much attention to Princess Charlotte, who addressed him more than he her. He ate very moderately, considering his age, and only drank water. When Countess Lieven played the piano after dinner he kissed her hand in compliment, a proceeding which appeared to the English ladies very strange, but decidedly desirable. Mrs. Campbell could find no end in praising him. 'What an amiable creature! and how good-looking. He will be the handsomest man in Europe!' Next morning the Russians left the house. I was told that at bedtime his servants filled a leather sack with hay from the stable for him, upon which, it was said, he always slept. Our English friends consider this affectation."

But Cousin Christian and Prince Leopold were inclined afterwards to look upon this "devilish handsome man" as a devilishly accomplished comedian.

In Berlin I never saw the Grand Duke Nicholas court any lady but his consort, of whom he was passionately enamoured; but in St. Petersburg the Emperor Nicholas certainly courted other beauties besides. My lovely colleague, Charlotte von Hagn, was especially distinguished by the "handsomest man of all the Russias," on the occasion of her professional visit to St. Petersburg, and was also invited by the Czar to Kalisch, when he attended the Princes' Congress there, in 1835.

The Hereditary Grand Duchess Alexandrina really was "that shining, majestic picture of a woman" of whom Heine writes in ecstasy —

"She resembles those chivalrous women who are reflected to our imagination so sweetly in the magic mirror of old fairy-tales, and of whom it is hard to say whether they are saints or amazons. I believe the sight of these pure features has made me a better man."

It was said that a Dr. Stuhr fell so passionately in love with the beautiful Princess Alexandra as to lose his reason over it, that he followed his goddess's every step, and at last offered himself to the king as his son-in-law, quite seriously, in a letter. The king had the poor lunatic sent to an asylum.

I found this "shining, majestic woman" specially interesting, owing to the great resemblance she bore to Queen Louise. But H.H. the Hereditary Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, whom King George IV. of England, the "first gentleman of his

time," had wooed in vain, because Friedrich Wilhelm III. did not wish to have a *mauvais sujet* for a son-in-law, was looked upon as very proud. We comedians did not exist for her at all.

On the other hand, her husband, the "Red Paul," was urbanity and good-nature itself. In May, 1825, by command of the king and through Timm's good offices, it was my good fortune, together with other favoured ones of the theatre, to be present at the brilliant festivities given on the occasion of the marriage of Princess Louise with her cousin, Prince Frederic of the Netherlands. In the *Lustgarten*[1] the cannon thundered; in the *Schloss* we saw the stately bridal procession pass by us to the chapel. It was generally remarked that Princess Liegnitz, though she was the king's wife, took no part in the procession like the other royal princesses; but trotted after them with her lady-in-waiting, and carried her own train. At the gala dinner she did not appear at all. Nor did she during the grand performance of Spontini's opera, "Alcidor," sit in a row with the Queen of the Netherlands and the princesses, but behind them, a victim to cruel court etiquette.

The crown prince and his brothers never addressed us theatrical ladies at the feasts in the palace. This, it was said, proceeded on the part of the crown prince from disinclination; on that of his brother from prudence. With a courteous salute they passed us by.

On the other hand the charmingly beautiful Crown Princess Elisabeth never missed an opportunity of

[1] Pleasure-grounds in front of the Royal *Schloss* (palace) in Berlin.

addressing a sympathizing word to us. And how hearty sounded her strong Bavarian accent!

Thus she came up to us, when after Pius Alexander's death we played his comedy, "Der Mann von funfzig Jahren," at the palace for the first time, and kindly addressed Amalie Wolff —

"Did it not refresh your heart to see his memory honoured here, in the creation of your late lamented husband whom all so admired and esteemed? The play has very much delighted me. You, dear Wolff, and Ludwig Devrient were masterly; also Fräulein Bauer was charming."

And when Amalie Wolff kissed the kind princess's hand, unable to speak a word, the crown princess continued still more softly —

"Since *you* conceive and practise your art as real, genuine *art*, and not as a trade, it will be, I have no doubt, a solace for your mourning heart."

I was glad to have at last had an opportunity of admiring quite near those wonderful, large, expressive eyes, perhaps the most beautiful I ever saw. Even when a child in Baden-Baden I had gazed from a distance at them.

The crown princess and her dear Fritz lived in happy, harmonious, quite middle-class matrimony, only she often deplored with tears that she was denied the so much longed-for blessing of children. A charming characteristic trait was told of her. When the Prussian crown prince had come to woo her, she, then Princess Elisabeth of Bavaria, had quickly taken off her one shoe with the high heel, which she was in the habit of wearing on account of a slight halt in her gait, that the lover might not be deceived about this

bodily defect. And yet he had taken his Elise in spite of her limp, and never repented it either. The crown prince, his brother Prince Wilhelm, and Prince Frederic of the Netherlands I have seen in their travelling-coach in Karlsruhe, when I was a girl of twelve. They wore at that time, according to the prevalent fashion, Scottish dust-mantles of Stuart tartan, and made a very favourable impression upon me in their blooming freshness of youth and cheerfulness. In the evening they appeared in the theatre, when Calderon's "Life a Dream" was performed, and then continued their journey to Baden-Baden, where the Bavarian and Swedish royal families (who were rich in daughters) happened to be staying at the time.

Now, and here in Berlin, the gallant-looking Prince Wilhelm was always being talked about as a suitor; only, to-day betrothed him to a Princess of Würtemburg, to-morrow to Princess Marianne of the Netherlands or the Princess Marie of Wiemar, the day after to-morrow to Princess Cecilie of Sweden, with whom I had once danced so gaily when a child. Prince Wilhelm could not have delighted me more than if he had espoused the charming Cecilie. But it was said that Prince Wilhelm could not fancy any of these princesses, though all were pretty, and that he would not marry at all if he were not allowed to espouse his ardently loved Princess Elise Radziwill. But cruel politics and dire court etiquette could not permit this.

Was it this hot, hopeless love that made him so completely insensible to all theatrical beauty at that time? Cold as ice, Prince Wilhelm passed us by.

And yet I have once spoken to the prince—behind

a screen. It was in the spring of 1828, during an engagement in St. Petersburg. Prince Wilhelm was staying there on a visit to his sister, the Empress Alexandra; some said, to gain over the empress-mother for his betrothal with Princess Augusta of Weimar, who together with her parents was spending the winter in St. Petersburg; others, to make a last effort to effect his union with Elise Radziwill.

Well, I arrived at St. Petersburg for my engagement in March, 1828. To secure its success it was of the greatest importance that I should first play before the court in the Winter Palace. But there were great difficulties in the way of that, since Empress Alexandra was to leave only three days later for her spring sojourn in the Crimea. All levers were set in motion to arrange my introduction at court and my appearance on the stage. Friend Timm had given me a letter of recommendation to the chief chamberlain of the empress, who promised to do his best. With the director of the German theatre I hastened, scarcely alighted from the travelling coach, to the all-powerful theatre divinities, Prince Wolkonski, Prince Cutaigow, intendant of the German Theatre, and Prince Dolgorucki, intendant of the French stage, and all promised that they would further my wishes. But when their realization became even more doubtful I was advised to ask the prince to use his influence with his imperial sister in my favour. So I hastened back to the Winter Palace to beseech his Royal Highness for an audience. This was immediately granted. The prince appeared in the reception-room, but, like myself, was rather embarrassed. While I was laying my request before him steps were heard to approach. I,

in my embarrassment, stepped behind a large screen, the prince follows, perplexed we face each other, till I regain sufficient self-command to stammer forth my request. The prince promises to speak to the empress, and so finishes this strange screen audience. Thanks to the good offices of Prince Wilhelm, the performance at court really did take place. I chose the comedy "Der Mann im Feuer," in which I had met with such great success shortly before in Riga; but owing to the hasty rehearsal in St. Petersburg I had no great hope of succeeding. The other actors were not even up in the text of their parts, and, in their anxiety to hear the prompter, they dragged on shockingly what otherwise was a graceful comedy, full of *esprit* and *tempérament*. Nor were the personal appearances of the stout, phlegmatic Barlow and the prosy Wiebe at all suited for the general and the fiery lover respectively.

In rather desperate humour I completed my toilette that evening upon the pretty stage of the magnificent hall, behind a screen, for dressing-rooms there were none. I wore white satin with a covering of silk lace, a set of pearls and a rose in my hair. When I was ready, I entered the hall to have a closer look at its decoration and, perhaps, by so doing relieve my apprehensions. Suddenly a side-door opened, and Prince Wilhelm and the Prince of Orange stood before me, saluting me kindly.

With my best, once famous curtsey, I expressed my thanks for H.R.H.'s kind recommendation, but also my anxiety lest I should make a fool of myself with so imperfect a cast.

Then Prince Wilhelm said with great goodness—

"Oh, she who pleases so much in Berlin will not be put to shame in St. Petersburg. I have seen and admired you before in this part."

And I did *not* come to grief. The empress laughed heartily, and the emperor applauded me vigorously. When, after the conclusion of the play, I again stood behind my dressing-screen, wiping off the paint, Prince Wolkonski brought me a beautiful gold diadem with a star of brilliants, "de la part de l'impératrice."

As often as Prince Wilhelm afterwards saluted me in his paternal palace in Berlin, a rosy smile came over his manly face. He thought, like me, of our embarrassment during the strange screen audience in the Winter Palace of St. Petersburg.

When I left Berlin in the May of the year following, "to follow other stars in England," as Varnhagen writes, the Prussian capital was preparing for the festivities in connection with the marriage of Prince Wilhelm of Prussia with the beautiful Princess Augusta of Weimar.

The king's third son, Prince Karl, of whom Heine writes with strange enthusiasm in 1822, "that beautiful, youthful form, with gentle features and lovely clear eyes," was not so shy as his brother Wilhelm. He was gay, and carried on all kinds of sport with horses and dogs, and it was asserted that the young ballet beauties were not such strangers to him, as might have been supposed from his staid demeanour towards them at the dances in the palace. As for promptness of retort and boldness of wit, the lively prince was nearly a match for his brother the crown prince. A capital anecdote is related of him.

Once, young Prince Karl visited München, and, of course, also the eccentric artist-king, Ludwig I., the brother-in-law of the Prussian crown prince. King Ludwig at that period had the strange whim of asking everybody riddles. For example:—

"What would you do if you were a dentist?"

The reply was always given by his Majesty himself with great self-complacency,—

"I should extract the bad tooth of time."

Or, "What would you do if you were a diver?"

Answer:—"I should throw myself into the sea of the past."

Prince Karl fortunately had heard of this royal sphinx, and when King Ludwig asked him triumphantly,—

"What would you do if you were a dentist?" the prince answered with the greatest gravity,—

"Your Majesty, I should throw myself into the sea of the past."

King Ludwig I. of Bavaria never again tried to set riddles to Prince Karl of Prussia.

With the same fortunate boldness Prince Karl also cut through the Gordian knot which threw obtacles in the way of his marriage with the beautiful Princess Maria of Weimar, whom he loved tenderly. The proud mother of the princess, Grand Duchess Maria Paulovna, wished to have the wedding take place in Weimar; but King Friedrich Wilhelm claimed this honour for Berlin. No one knew a way out of this difficulty, till the impatient bridegroom settled the matter. "I was born, baptized, and confirmed in Charlottenburg, and I have always vowed to be married only there." And thus it was done, but quite privately, since the proud mother of the bride pre-

ferred absenting herself from her eldest daughter's wedding rather than concede precedence to the crown princess of Prussia.

Also, the entry of the newly married pair into Berlin passed off rather noiselessly, because on the occasion of the entry of the crown princess many persons had lost their lives in the waters of the Spree, owing to the collapse of a bridge under pressure of the crowd.

Princess Karl was a charming young bride, beaming with happiness and gaiety. During the next performance in the palace she stepped up to us and brought Amalie Wolff the kindest regards from her old master Goethe; and often afterwards she had a kind word for us.

The king's youngest son, Prince Albrecht, had grown tall very rapidly; he was fair, and so young still that little could be said of him. He married, soon after my departure from Berlin, the lovely Princess Marianne of the Netherlands.

An union without luck or joy.

Princess Liegnitz, whose blooming face was ever covered by the same cool marble repose, has always been a puzzle for me. She was never heard to laugh heartily, nor were her eyes ever seen to gleam with emotion. Was this phlegm? Was it a politic scheme, or, as some people thought, stupidity? Did the princess feel happy or uncomfortable in her ambiguous position? I have no answer for it, but speak to us comedians the princess never did.

Prince Friedrich, son of the late Prince Louis and Princess Friederike, Duchess of Cumberland, had something ideal, amiable, and winning in his whole personal appearance. His spouse, the unhappy

Princess of Anhalt-Bernburg, with the delicate pale face and great melancholy eyes, even then a languishing flower, rarely appeared at court. Did she anticipate her awful fate—to have to spend almost all the bright season of youth in the desolate loneliness of the castle of Ellern, near Düsseldorf, like her unhappy brother, wrapped in mental darkness inherited from her mother?

The youngest princes at the court of Friedrich Wilhelm III. were the sons of Prince and Princess Wilhelm, mere boys. Adalbert, afterwards husband of the dancer Thérèse Elsler, and Waldemar, whose slender, poetic, youthful form was to prove so dangerous to a daughter of Bettinas, till death so prematurely tore him from her arms.

Just like an ideal hero of fiction, so fascinating in his charms, with dark burning eyes, the Prince of Lucca now and then appeared as guest at the Berlin court, suddenly to disappear again as soon as the great spring parades began. It was said that the handsome Italian prince could not be persuaded to mount a horse, and he would have had to ride in the suite of his Majesty.

The king broke the bone of his right leg immediately above the ankle one morning, by slipping while descending the small iron stair that leads from the apartments of the late lamented Queen Luise into his own study. This alarming news fell like a thunderbolt on the 24th of December, 1826, amidst the gay court life.

All Berlin was greatly agitated, and crowds assembled in front of the palace to hear particulars. Mother Eunicke came rushing up to us crying, to communicate the dreadful news. The worst fears were

for some time entertained, owing to the king's advanced age. We too hastened to Timm to inquire.

We found the faithful servant in tears, but heard also the joyful bulletin of the medical men, that the fracture of the leg would indeed require time for its cure, but was not dangerous. Nay, the Princess Liegnitz, at the request of the king, had to take her accustomed drive the same afternoon, and through as many streets as possible, to show to the Berliners that they had nothing to fear.

The accident had happened on the same stair which had cost the Crown Princess Luise her first hopes of maternity, from a fall occasioned by fright at a stranger whom she met on it.

In the palace, lists were opened, in which sympathizing visitors entered their names. The king was much amused by these lists, which he was never tired of having read out to him, with their often genuinely Berlinese remarks of quaint but devoted loyalty. His Majesty suffered most from *ennui*, since the wonted evening *divertissements* in the theatre of course had to be dispensed with. How delighted we were when we heard for the first time that on the morrow a performance would again be held before his Majesty in the palace! And then, when the king in a wheeled chair appeared among us during rehearsal with all his old affability, then we kissed his hand with sincere tears of joy. And how great was the cheering with which the king was received when driving out, and on the occasion of his first visit to the theatre!

On March 21st a brilliant court festival took place in the concert-hall of the play-house, in honour of the Queen of Bavaria, who was on a visit to her daughter,

the crown princess. It caused no small noise that, besides the court, no spectators were admitted except some favourites of the theatre, invited by Papa Timm, by command of the king. And so we sat, in first-rate toilettes, up in the gallery, separated from the royal gallery only by a rich velvet *portière*, Mdme. Angelika Catalani and her son, Henriette Sontag, Mdme. Milder-Hauptmann, Mdme. Lemière-Desargus, Mdme. Hoguet-Vestris, Ballet-master Hoguet—who had taught the court the mystery of quadrilles—my mother, and I.

The Catalani had lately arrived in Berlin upon her last great concert-tour through Europe, but had not yet sung in public. By a strange accident I had made her acquaintance already, in the waiting-saloon of a bathing establishment. She carried a charming little poodle dog upon her arm; similarly I had my beloved little spaniel Lisinka. At first sight I recognised in the tall, majestic lady with the beautiful Italian features the famous *cantatrice*, whom I had admiringly gazed at once in Karlsruhe when quite a small child. The reciprocal admiration of our favourites soon brought about an introduction and an animated conversation.

Then a stately gentleman stepped into the saloon, leading on his arm an aged matron; this was Prince Puckler-Muskau, and soon he was the third in our dog-friendship. He drew out from under his fur coat the prettiest rose-coloured little greyhound I ever saw. It was not larger than a squirrel, and its little eyes sparkled like diamonds. Of course Catalani and I broke forth into the loudest French admiration. We were introduced to the princess, and our little dogs made each other's acquaintance on the sofa.

CHAPTER V.

PRINCE DON JUAN.

The Family of Frederick the Great—The Liaison of Prince August, alias Don Juan, with Madame Récamier—His other Amours—He Persecutes Karoline with His Attentions—She Springs Through a Window to Escape Him and Invokes the Protection of the King—Trial of Madame Kracau, the Prince's Accomplice—Karoline leaves Berlin for Koburg—Her First Meeting with Prince Leopold—Social Life in Berlin—Henriette Sontag—The Justuzrath Ludolf—Sophie Müller—Professor Von Schlegel—Dr. Christopher Birch—Friedrich Förster—Dramatic Berlin—Raupach—Madame Stich—Pius Alexander Wolff—Amalie Wolff—Téichmann—Musical Berlin—Boucher—Karl Maria Von Weber—Paganini—His Affection for His Son—Zelter—Mendelssohn—Beer—Meyerbeer—Berger—Moscheles—Karoline as a Pianiste—Karl Eckert—Other Berlin Artists—The Sculptor Ranch—The Painters Kruger and Begas.

Formerly, when on the stage of the Königstadt theatre, my attention had often been attracted by an aristocratic gentleman in the uniform of a general, seated in the royal box: a fine-looking, imposing figure, with sharply cut, interesting features, dark,

curling hair, and black sparkling eyes, which he seldom diverted from me, from the moment I appeared on the stage, looking all the while at me with a burning lustre, as if they would consume me.

"Who is this bold starer?" I asked my colleague, Fräulein Weidner.

"Ah! you don't know him yet? That is Prince August, to be sure, *alias* Prince 'Don Juan,' on account of his many gallant adventures. He is the most dangerous man in Berlin. Be on thy guard, sweet floweret."

"But he does not bear the least resemblance to the fair princes of our royal house. He looks more like a Frenchman."

As often as Prince August was in the theatre, the same bold stare of his burning eyes, before which I had to cast down mine as if by instinct, and the expression of his intrinsically handsome face, appeared to me each time more and more repulsive.

And then, after the first theatrical performance in the palace he came up to us with his wicked smile, like a victory-conscious pasha, who examines his slaves with a view as to whom he will throw his handkerchief at.

He addressed me alone of all the lady artistes, and his words drove the hot blood into my face. He praised me, my beautiful figure, my blooming freshness, my fair hair, but as the sportsman praises a beautiful horse. His eyes burned upon me, his breath touched me, I was scarcely able to answer a few cool phrases. My tears threatened to break forth. Then the prince walked on with a strange smile.

"Little dear, take care!" said Amalie Wolff to me.

"He has cast his eyes upon you, and Prince 'Don Juan' is not accustomed to do things by halves!" I laughed, but my heart was oppressed. The dancers put their heads together, tittered, and looked at me mockingly.

It was soon known throughout Berlin that Prince August had thought me worthy of his attention, and on all sides we were warned against this worst of all *roués*. I now also learned more about Prince "Don Juan."

His father was the youngest and least distinguished brother of Frederick the Great. His mother, Princess Ferdinand Louise, a daughter of Margrave Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg-Schwedt, was distinguished in her youth for her beauty and her numerous gallantries, and in her old age for her pride. Her Italian singing-master she had filled with so ardent a passion, that he built himself a hut on Vesuvius, to live entirely on the remembrance of her. A Count Schmettau was the declared favourite of her heart. Frederick the Great used to call her children "the horrible Schmettau race" for whom his imbecile brother accumulated treasures.

The eldest son, Friedrich, had died in the prime of youth. The second was the highly talented but unhappy Prince Louis Ferdinand, who had inherited the hot blood of his mother. His wild youth was a chain of amours and debts. His uncle, Prince Heinrich, who died in Rheinsberg, had made the handsome, amiable Louis Ferdinand the sole heir of his large fortune, but the light-headed, good-natured young prince had renounced his right in favour of his father, having been persuaded by his family to do so, in order to be able to divide the fortune with his brother August later on.

Thus it happened, when Prussia's death-despising Achilles had fallen at Saalfeld, in 1806, that he left behind him many a gentle weeping heart, and many mourning creditors. His million (thalers) of debt has never been paid.

Prince Ferdinand died in 1813, the proud Princess Ferdinand in 1820. Her pompous funeral ceremonies she had herself prescribed down to the smallest detail in her testament, but not the merry dances which people and soldiers executed with their torches on the occasion.

Her son, Prince August, was the richest prince at the royal court. He was possessed of ten millions (of thalers) and the beautiful castle of Bellevue in the "Thiergarten."

In the Wars of Independence he is said to have distinguished himself by courage and prudence. At the age of twenty-seven he fought at Jena, and during the retreat he rode the noble English horse that had carried his brother Louis unto death at Saalfeld, and whose saddle was still bespattered with the brother's blood.

In the autumn of the following year, 1807, Prince August was allowed to leave France, after his captivity. But before doing so, he paid that fateful visit to Coppet which brought him in contact with the beautiful Madame Récamier. Klausewitz writes from Coppet August 16, 1807:—

"We are here daily in the company of Madame de Staël. She speaks much, but interestingly, so that one really hardly tires of hearing her. With acquired flourishes about art and literature one does not get far with her. I see a living example of this (Prince August), and therefore I am all the more pleased in

my silence, for I feel that in maintaining it I do not play quite the worst part. The notorious Madame Récamier forms one of the party, a very ordinary *coquette.*"

With this "very common coquette," who was, nevertheless, considered the handsomest woman of her time, Prince August, always amorous, quickly formed the most tender *liaison.* Even a betrothal took place, and rings were exchanged, although Madame Récamier's husband was still living in Paris. Madame de Staël, with her loving heart, blessed the union!

Quite naïvely the beautiful Julie, in a letter, asks her husband's consent to a divorce, that she might be able to marry morganatically the beautiful Prince August. Monsieur Récamier gives his consent, but at the same time reminds Julie that she was a Roman Catholic, the prince a Protestant, that the prince was not allowed to marry her without the consent of the king, and that she would occupy but an awkward position at the proud court of royal Prussia. And who would warrant to her that the prince, notorious for his many amours, would remain faithful to her?

So they stopped short meanwhile, at the betrothal and the most affectionate love. Madame Récamier has often vowed that handsome Prince August of Prussia had been her only passionate love. In October, 1807, the lovers had to separate, after having been together in Coppet for nearly three months. The prince returned to the Prussian court, then in Königsberg; Madame Récamier, to her husband in Paris, to have herself painted for her beloved prince by the famous Gérard, in a bathing costume, which could hardly be called a costume at all.

In a glowing letter, dated Königsberg, the 24th of April, 1808, the prince answered :—

"How can I express the delight which filled me when I read your letter, and then looked at your sweet portrait! Whole hours I pass in front of this enrapturing picture, and my fancy paints a happiness which surpasses whatever luxurious imagination is able to invent. What human bliss can be compared to the sublime feeling of being loved by an angel like you! You know, by my former letter, with what impatience I await your answer, which will decide about my departure for Aachen" (Aix-la-Chapelle.)

The meeting in Aachen did not, however, take place, nor in Karlsbad, or Teplitz, whither the love-stricken prince so often invited his beautiful Julie most urgently. The prince arrives for a rendezvous at Schaffhausen, previously arranged, but does not find his beloved, since, by order of Napoleon, she is forbidden to leave France. Only during the prince's sojourn as victor, in 1814 and 1815, in Paris, the lovers met once more, and then again in 1818, during the Congress, in Aachen, whither Julie had come at the request of her lover. There, in the stillness of the night, were seen the prince's equipage and two mounted torch-bearers, stopping for hours in front of Madame Récamier's dwelling.

That probably was the end of this love affair. Prince August had turned to other goddesses long before. That picture of the beautiful Julie leaving the bath I have seen in Berlin. The prince had sent it to an exhibition of paintings, where, of course, it stimulated strongly the biting wit of the Berliners.

Madame Récamier received a pension from the prince.

His portrait adorned her writing-table in the Abbaye aux Bois in Paris till her death.

In my time there were, among the prince's hundred amours, two recognized sultanas. The one was the sister of the celebrated artist-brothers Wichmann, whose portrait-busts were particularly in request. The younger brother also executed a most beautiful bust of Henriette Sontag.

By the influence of Prince August, Mdlle. Wichmann was created Countess Waldenburg. Her daughters, the eccentric Countesses Waldenburg, were even admitted to the royal balls, where they attracted attention by their exaggerated vivacity. Of Comtesse Evelina Waldenburg, it was said afterwards, that she had once, in a kind of paroxysm of love, in Potsdam, attempted to hang herself.

In September, 1825, the king ennobled also Prince August's second mistress (a beautiful Jewess from Rheinsberg, named Arens, with magnificent, large, dark eyes, and brilliant black hair), under the name of Von Prittwitz. This name they took from the beautiful estate of Prittwitz in the Neumark, which the prince settled upon his beloved. In Berlin Frau von Prittwitz inhabited her own beautiful house at the Potsdam gate, and whenever she appeared in the theatre she was glittering with diamonds.

Strictly speaking, it was incomprehensible how King Friedrich Wilhelm III., so virtuous and otherwise so strict in morals, by his public recognition literally sanctioned these love affairs of Prince August. Timm gave me this explanation:—"That, according to the family laws of royal Prussia, only the princes standing nearest the throne were expected to marry legitimately;

for otherwise, where was it to end, with all the royal princes and princesses, who could claim rights from the throne, and appanages from the country?" But Prince August was such a very distant cousin of the king's, that no such claims could possibly be made on behalf of his children, however legitimate. I have never been able to comprehend such abstruse policy at the obvious cost of public morality.

Now I was to be raised to the rank of third acknowledged sultana of Prince August.

After the prince had molested me by his importunities at all the theatrical performances in the palace, he one evening, in company with an adjutant, came on foot even into our dwelling. What torments did my mother and I suffer that hour! what humiliation! what disgrace! And yet we durst not exactly show the door to the lascivious admirer, because he was a royal prince, and cousin to his Majesty, and I only a royal actress! In that hour I think I felt more bitterly than at any time of my life the humiliation and danger of my position as a public actress.

When the prince at last went away our honest landlord heard how he said on the stair to his adjutant —

"And yet the young prude must be mine, should it cost me a hundred thousand thalers."

In what excitement, in what despair did my mother and I remain behind!

Next morning a messenger brought us wonderfully beautiful flowers in pots, with large, white, shining, bell-shaped blossoms, which exhaled a peculiarly sweet narcotic perfume.

"From whom?" my mother asked the bearer.

He produced a card without a name, but with the words, "The most ardent admirer of beauty would like not to be named, but guessed."

Old Colonel Zechelin, the most faithful of the old theatrical guards, who happened then to be present, whispered to us —

"The very same flowers I saw in the magnificent hot-houses of Prince August in Bellevue."

"Take back the flowers; we receive presents from known friends only," said my mother; and messenger, flowers, and perfume were gone.

Soon afterwards, when I read E. T. A. Hoffmann's strange novelette "Datura," in which an old dame, the wife of a young professor, is to be removed by her husband, who is smitten by another love, by means of the perfume of the white, poisonous datura blossoms, I could not help thinking of Prince August's homage of flowers.

At *Hofrath* Henn's (Clauren) house we had made the acquaintance of a most elegant, very musical lady, who in a most ingratiating manner approached my mother and me, and asked to be allowed to visit us. She was called Madame Kracau, that was all we knew about her. She came and overwhelmed us with acts of civility. We sometimes played *à quatre mains* together.

One day Madame Kracau brought a whole basketful of magnificent trinkets, and desired me to choose from them as I pleased. I should, by doing so, highly gratify an admirer of high rank.

"Prince August!" I exclaimed, involuntarily.

Madame Kracau smiled with much significance, and nearly melted away in praise of the fine-looking, chivalrous, magnanimous prince.

"We cannot make any use of these trinkets," said my mother, very determinedly, "and must insist on your not troubling us with such presents for the future."

When madame had in vain tried all her persuasive arts upon us, she asked to be at least allowed to leave the trinkets with us in the meantime, as she had to pay an indispensable visit, and could not take the heavy basket with her.

We were good-natured, and not politic enough to refuse this request. My mother made room for it in a chest of drawers, locked up in it the costly basket, and gave the key to Madame Kracau, who only took it after much hesitation.

But, of course, Madame Kracau never returned.

Meanwhile, letters upon letters from Prince August had arrived, in which his Royal Highness became more and more plain and business-like. He offered for my possession 100,000 thalers, at last even 200,000, a furnished house in Berlin, and the title of baroness. The king would give his consent, and I would live with my mother in Berlin, highly honoured. My children would be recognized.

My mother's only answer to all this was the urgent request not to disturb our peace. But at last she threatened to invoke the protection of the king.

Then the prince's epistolary love-proposals ceased, but not his practices. Repeatedly we wrote to Madame Kracau, to fetch away the trinkets. She did not reply. Then, one morning, I met the elegant "lady" "Unter den Linden," just when I was coming from a rehearsal in the opera-house. I must presume that she had waylaid me.

She met me heartily in her old way, apologized very earnestly for never yet having come for the trinkets. She was afraid of my mother's severe looks, with whom she had lost favour, no doubt owing to her over-great sympathy with a noble gentleman, who was, after all, very love-worthy. But if I would have the great kindness to go with her the few steps to her house, she would give me the key to the chest of drawers, and be obliged if I would return the things to her.

Madame Kracau understood how to chat away so innocently, to play the repentant so charmingly, that she had soon overcome my scruples. Thoughtless as I always was, following only the impulse of the moment, I guilelessly followed the alluring tones of the practised fowler, and went into the snare. She took me to the Neue Wilhelmstrasse, into a very elegant dwelling on the ground-floor, in which I saw again those exotic flowers with the large, white, shining cups, and the narcotic perfume which had once before put us so much about. Madame asserted that they came from Bauche's nursery. In vain I urged her to let me go. The amiable woman had to tell me so many flattering things about my last play, to relate so many interesting incidents about her travels, to show me so many charming prints and knick-knacks, that I allowed myself to be detained again and again.

Then a carriage drove up. Madame rose, opened a costly Vienna grand piano, and requested me to try her new instrument, just till she had fetched the key. She disappeared in the side-room. There I saw, before the door shut again, with a quick glance, a

richly-decked, small luncheon-table, with champagne cups and silver ice-coolers. Then the door had closed again.

With a light-heartedness, to-day incomprehensible even to myself, I followed the beckoning of the splendid grand piano, first struck a few chords standing, then sat down, and soon was lost in melodious *fantasias* till I heard the door of the side-room open softly. A look that way, and my fingers slipped, as if paralyzed, with a shrill dissonance off the key-board.

Out of the door stepped Prince August, and approached with a faun-like smile and victory on his lips. At the same time I heard that the door by which I had entered the room from the lobby, was softly locked from without. But two steps more, and Prince "Don Juan" would have held me in his arms.

Then there came over me, who was as a rule so easily intimidated, the strange courage which only great fear can give. With a loud cry for help, I sprang up, threw the heavy piano-stool before the prince's feet, rushed to the window, tore down the pots with the seductive flowers, forced the casement, and sprang, screaming, into the street below, before the baffled "Don Juan" could catch me by the dress.

All this was the work of a moment, thanks to the boyish gymnastic exercises of my childhood, and the climbing practice I had had in parts like that of the wanton page, Paul von Husch, and other trouser characters at the theatre.

In the greatest excitement, without hat, without shawl, and amongst the questions, cries, pushes of gathering neighbours and passers-by, I hurried in

flying haste, and almost senseless, out of the Neue Wilhelmstrasse towards the Linden, and there fortunately, almost ran down our good friend Justizrath Ludolf, who was quite thunder-struck to find me in this condition.

In a few words I had given him the most necessary information, then the tears burst from my eyes. Ludolf called a cab to free me from the ever-increasing press of the inquisitive multitude. We took our seats. Ludolf cried out to the driver, "The king's palace," and off we went.

On the way there I had to give to our friend all the particulars. He advised me to go directly to Timm, to ask him for an audience of the king, and the latter's protection against Prince August. He (Ludolf) would at once lodge information with the court concerning the dangerous Madame Kracau.

Timm at first tried to calm me. I should consider the king, who had always been so kind to me, and that the whole royal family would be compromised by this scandal.

But I was beyond myself, and not to be calmed, so that Timm had to go into the king's room and report the matter to him. In great excitement the monarch came into the audience-room, and I had to repeat to him everything most minutely.

The king indignantly called out again and again,—

"Vile, shocking, *mauvais sujet*—cause disgrace—be calm, child—shall have satisfaction—let justice take its course, but pray, spare prince, for my sake."

Gratefully I kissed the hand of Friedrich Wilhelm the Just, and hastened to my mother, who was still quite ignorant of all this.

After mature reflection we should have liked very much to have dispensed with the legal proceedings if this had been possible. Like wildfire the story, of course greatly exaggerated, had spread through the town. My cry for help and leap from the window had had too many witnesses. Ludolf had already lodged information with the court of justice and the police, and so all my friends advised me not to frustrate the ends of justice and the rehabilitation of my reputation.

Thus the trial took its ugly, exciting course. Madame Kracau was arrested. My mother and I were repeatedly examined as witnesses against her. It caused us annoyance and vexation in consequence.

Madame Kracau showed much discrimination during the trial. She sought to represent everything as a joke and unfortunate accident, and tried to clear the prince entirely from all blame. As for the rest, patiently and with a view to the prince's solatium, she took everything upon her own shoulders, calculating that the prince would know how to protect her.

Nevertheless, very unpleasant revelations came to the light. Madame Kracau had been in her youth the mistress of Prince August, and afterwards became his obliging confidante. The house she inhabited belonged to the prince. The two sculptors Wichmann, the brothers of Countess Waldenburg, had their studio in the house.

At our request the chest of drawers with the trinkets was opened by a police agent, and the untouched costly basket handed over to the court.

Madame Kracau got off with a comparatively short term of imprisonment.

Prince August got a slight moral lecture from the king, after which he made a tour of inspection in his capacity of General of Artillery, from which he rested in Rheinsberg with his latest mistress, a little actress from the Königstadt theatre.

When he returned to Berlin the king said to him, as Timm told me, these gentle words,—

"Bauer to be left alone—decent girl—don't like that—no scandal—enough talk already among the people—unpleasant!"

Prince August, of whose latest connection with the beautiful ballet-dancer Fourcisi soon all Berlin was talking, *did* leave me alone afterwards with his love, but on the other hand pursued me all the more cruelly with his hatred. Systematically he tried to undermine my reputation as artist and woman. He was indefatigable in spreading ever new ugly reports about me.

When I, along with the half of Berlin, had the misfortune to take the false Count Samoilow to be a real one, then Prince "Don Juan" triumphed in great glee, and overwhelmed *Madame la Comtesse de Samoilow* with scorn and derision.

It was chiefly owing to Prince August that I quitted Berlin, to meet another misfortune.

This new misfortune was called Prince Leopold of Koburg, whom, too, I saw for the first time during a theatrical performance at court.

But I had not yet followed this new fortune—as it was called at that time, and as I myself had trusted it would be—to England, when the worst calumnies about me had already been received by Prince Leopold from Berlin, from Prince August of Prussia.

More about this by-and-by.

* * * * * *

My joyful youth-time in Berlin between the years 1824 and 1829 was richer than any other in triumphs on the stage and in society, also in admirers—admirers of divers kinds, of my fresh, youthful person, of my cheerful disposition, or my merry art.

These admirers may be divided into social, æsthetical, and amorous.

The social life of old Berlin, half a century ago, was most animated and gay. In social intercourse the people sought compensation for the absent public life of a political capital. And Berlin, which was a small town at that time, scarcely a fifth part as large as the present imperial residence of over a million inhabitants, gave to this social intercourse a character as intimate and familiar as that of a provincial town. Everybody knew everybody, and the same people were always meeting each other in all places. And this lively intercourse was facilitated by its economy and modest pretensions, very different from what they are to-day. People did not expect luxurious feasts, splendidly furnished saloons, or brilliant toilettes.

One might appear in the same dress at many different parties without provoking sarcastic comment, and we were as merry as could be, despite the poor light given out by some meagre tallow-candles that claimed the constant application of snuffers, things hardly known even by name to this younger generation, and despite the plain deal tables, over a cup of tea and the famous (or notorious) thin Berlin sandwiches.

One of the most hospitable, snug, elegant and in-

teresting houses was that of "Justizrath"[1] Ludolf, in winter in his beautiful residence Unter den Linden, in summer in his charming villa in the Thiergarten. He was a cheerful, intellectual man of the world, enthusiastically fond of art, artists, and especially ladies.

This really amiable man fell victim to the "Sontag epidemic," at that time raging in Berlin, and came to a sad end, of which more in a later part of these memoirs.

Scarcely had I acquired a little celebrity in Berlin when Ludolf became one of my warmest admirers and protectors, in all honour, be it understood. I had to assist at all the gay, and often even brilliant, festivals which this intellectual and vivacious patron and virtuoso arranged with grace and artistic skill, in his house, garden, some public place of entertainment, or upon an excursion to Treptow, to the Pichelsberge,[2] or to the then famous Pfaueninsel, with its wild beasts, lovely flowers, and the royal giant.

In celebration of Ludolf's birthday I once played in the piece "Die Savoyarden," together with his young nephew, who afterwards became known as the journalist and dramatist, Alexander Cosmar, and the charming Fräulein von Winterfeld, before a distinguished company of 300 persons, in his villa in the Thiergarten. As the crowning act of the performance, Henriette Sontag, the queen of the feast, arose from a gigantic flower-basket in the form of a most charming,

[1] Counsellor of justice, title of a minor judge.

[2] Charming spots in the neighbourhood of Berlin, and much frequented by pleasure-seekers.

lovely flower-fairy, and sang a song of homage with her sweet bird-voice.

In honour of Henriette, whom he held in the most enthusiastic veneration, Ludolf gave a fairy-like ball in the mirror-hall of confectioner Fuchs, during the winter of 1825-26. This building was then the most brilliant in Berlin, it had been built and decorated according to the splendid designs of Schinkel. For weeks before it took place all Berlin talked of this event, and all our dancing belles grew perfectly feverish with excitement, as to whether they would be among the happy chosen that would receive an invitation to this select entertainment, for, on account of the limited space, only thirty pairs of dancers were to be invited, and it was well known that at Ludolf's tribunal all claims to beauty and gracefulness were subjected to severe scrutiny. I was, however, deemed worthy by this critical court to become one of the chosen thirty.

At length the great evening arrived. The famous mirror-hall, the walls, doors, and ceiling of which consisted entirely of mirrors and richly gilt stucco, sparkled with hundreds of wax tapers, which were multiplied a thousand-fold by the reflex from all sides. In every corner and in all the window niches stood shimmering groups of flowers, and between them the dancing fair and young, who had done something more than usual for their toilettes, too, on this occasion.

Henriette Sontag was of ravishing beauty, sylph-like, radiant with gaiety, in her exquisite toilette; she wore white silk tulle, embroidered with green vine leaves and creepers, over white satin, a set of emeralds, and white roses in her hair.

The two sweet, but poor, Fräulein von Winterfeld wore charming Parisian toilettes, white crape with light blue asters, sent to them anonymously by the generous host Ludolf.

I wore iris gauze with garlands of rose-buds and guelder roses; a similar ornament in the hair.

But we were all outshone by the former solo dancer Röhnisch—whom a rich landed proprietor had carried off the stage—by her radiant Junonian beauty and the splendour of her toilette. She wore *drap d'argent* decked with the flowers of the pomegranate, and similar flowers in her light-brown locks. The brilliancy of her wonderfully beautiful deep-blue eyes vied with the fire of her rich display of diamonds. Mdlle. Röhnisch, along with Mdlle. Vestris (afterwards Madame Hoguet), had been trained as a dancer in Paris at the king's expense, but had soon been lost for the stage.

For a long time afterwards Berlin spoke of this fairy-like ball, and Ludolf swam in a sea of delight, and of debts, which, however, nobody was aware of at that time.

However amiable and self-sacrificing Ludolf was for his *protégées*, yet his admiration could take a very inconvenient turn. No less than the idolized Henriette, I was destined to experience this. He usurped the office of our absolute guardian and indispensable spiritual adviser. Nothing were we allowed to do without his consent, enter no contract for a *starring* engagement, study no new part, nay, almost receive no visit, attend no party without our protector having previously given his blessing to it. And how he could tease and bother us, without being himself aware of it, in his quality as protector.

Ludolf came almost daily to us, either to chat or play with me *à quatre mains*. It was his recreation after the sittings of the law courts, which were often probably wearisome enough. Through a strange whim of chance he found my mother and me almost regularly at dinner, and what he contributed to it in all harmlessness was not always the salt of friendship. He generally, likewise, carried with him a small box of Cayenne pepper, fitted with cruel, biting news, and, in the greatest apparent or real innocence, he would strew a few grains of it into the conversation; for example :—

"I say, poor child, are you aware that that vile Saphir has cut you up terribly as *Käthchen von Heilbronn*, in his *Schnellpost ?*"

"No! I only read friendly notices, or criticisms which well-meaning friends bring me. Moreover, Saphir is known to be a malicious, venal critic, who makes use of artistes only to fill his purse, or as an object for his pricking, biting wit. Besides, just in the character of *Käthchen*, I was applauded, and even recalled. Under these circumstances the venom of one quill does not do much harm."

"It does, it does. The public are but too easily bribed by Saphir's dazzling wit. I have been terribly annoyed at the impudence of this quill-desperado. You know how well I mean by you, of course, I, your warmest and sincerest friend; and you too, I am sure, will be annoyed when you read this new infamy. Here is the number of the *Schnellpost*; I have expressly bought it for you."

"Oh, Herr Justizrath, you are too kind!"

"Of course, that is understood among good friends.

But, *à propos*, did you notice that your most faithful admirer, on the right corner seat of the second row in the pit stalls, who used never to be absent from the theatre when you played, has deserted you?"

"'Beautiful Donna, let him go, he is not worthy of thy wrath.'"[1]

But neither my singing nor my laughing was, I dare say, quite unforced.

"Yes, the faithless man now worships, night after night, in his new reserved seat in the Königstadt theatre, the beautiful Julie Holzbecher. Do you not find her beautiful?"

"Certainly; she is a lovely creature."

"But nevertheless it annoys you. I see it by your looks."

"No; but you always spoil my dinner with your depressing conversation. Really, I cannot compliment you on your tact, Herr Justizrath."

Offended, he would rush away, leaving us behind in bad spirits. Very unnecessarily, I must say, soon after, his wife came rushing up, reproaching me for having spoiled her husband's favourite hour of recreation, after the wearisome sittings of the law courts.

Next day I say to my mother gaily, "To-day, at least, we shall be able to dine quietly. The Justizrath, I am sure, is not likely to trouble our soup again."

But Reisziger's charming song of the enamoured may-bug came true here too:—

Beautiful fly shuts her eyes,
And thinks he does not come again;
When, hark! a hum and buzz are heard,
The tulip-house to reel begins—
Little may-bug *came* again!

[1] Theatrical quotation.

Ling, ling, ling! so rang the bell, and our Justizrath—"my warmest admirer"—was there again with very special news, again to ruin both my temper and my appetite.

And yet, could I have dreamed at that time that this genial virtuoso would meet with a melancholy end, and within so short a time, I should have borne his often very vexatious attentions a little more kindly.

Ludolf ruined himself for art and artistes, especially for his idolized Sontag. When the large fortune he had inherited, largely augmented by his splendid practice as advocate, had been dissipated in extravagant hospitality, and almost insane enthusiasm for art, the unhappy man suddenly disappeared from Berlin and from his creditors, without leaving a trace behind. Some time afterwards it was rumoured that his body had been found in the Rhine; but I was never able to ascertain the true end of the generous but imprudent man, in whose house I had passed so many happy hours.

Another eminent Justizrath in Berlin ruined himself in the same way—by his unmeasured art enthusiasm—about the same time, embezzled trust money, and committed suicide.

I made the acquaintance of many interesting people in Ludolf's house; among others, of Ludwig Rellstab, the whilom artillery officer who had exchanged the war-weapon for the quill, and at that period was already the author of a tragedy, "Karl der Kuhne," and had written for his friend Bernhardt Klein the libretto for his (Klein's) opera "Dido," and many a sharp theatrical criticism.

Rellstab was only eight years older than myself, and a very attractive person, despite his undeniable ugliness; his nose was flat, having been broken by a fall upon the ice, his features rather Mongolian, and, moreover, for a young man he was unusually stout. Clever, lively eyes flashed through the glasses of his spectacles; his mind was uncommonly active, and his conversation simply charming when he did not happen to have a satirical fit. His critical pen was more dreaded than loved, and even his praise often wounded unintentionally. I asked it, as the highest favour of him, never to praise me in his critical notes, but rather graciously to censure me. I believe he has never either praised or censured me. Moreover, his especial sphere was *musical* criticism.

Once there was a great deal of talk about a masked ball which the Italian language-master Valentini, the adroit *Maître des plaisirs* of the merry Berlin of that time, was preparing in the large hall at Jagor's. Rellstab proposed to me that we two should appear as Papageno and Papagena, which I accepted with delight.

We chose no feather costumes such as are customary in the parts, but green, yellow, and red, trimmed with little red feathers. I wore on my head a feather ornament, like that of "Amazili," in "Ferdinand Cortez," corals around my neck and arms, and shoes of green satin.

My Papageno looked well, almost handsome, for the short mask covered his crushed nose, and only his finely-cut, smiling mouth was visible. He had provided me with a little basket, full of sugar birds and sugar eggs, and to accompany them he had made

charming verses, which I distributed among acquaintances.

We created some sensation, and were soon surrounded and quizzed by inquisitive masks. Rellstab gave capital repartees, and Papagena endeavoured not to put her Papageno to shame.

The royal princes appeared at this masquerade in dominoes, and mixed quite freely with the public. My faithful admirer, old Colonel Zechelin (who stuck persistently to my feathers), especially had to suffer much from the wit of young Prince Karl. Thus, the prince took hold of Zechelin's domino, and said to me:—

"Lovely Pa-pa-pagena, you must thoroughly clip the wings of this enamoured old parrot (Papageno), he is rather too flighty."

To young Rudolf Decker, who had just (in January, 1826) returned from a lengthy sojourn in Paris and London for his education, the nineteen-year-old Papagena gave a little sugar bird with a motto. It was not till forty-five years later that I learned from the then aged friend of my youth, the kind publisher of my "Stage Life," Rudolf Decker, the tenour of my motto, which ran,—

A boy who's born in January
Is destined for prosperity;

and how it had raised joy and hope in him who was a child of January—for even at that time he loved the charming nightingale, Pauline von Schätzell, whom he was permitted later on to lead home as his delightful spouse.

My talented colleague and countrywoman, the youthful tragedian of the Vienna Burgtheater, Sophie

Müller, had come to Berlin for a temporary engagement in 1827. When I returned her visit I found seated beside her on the sofa an old, active little gentleman, dressed up like a may-pole, very affected, wearing a wig of fair curls, having his lips and spare cheeks painted with rouge, clad most foppishly according to the latest fashion, decked with the most variegated orders, turning a gold snuff-box, upon which might be seen the turbaned portrait of Madame de Staël, between his well-kept fingers sparkling with jewels, and casting complacent looks into the mirror which was attached, under the lid, to the inside of the snuff-box.

Sophie Müller sat pale and fatigued, as if in a trance, beside this strange admirer. As if electrified she rushed forward to meet me, whispering during the embrace,—

"Thanks that you have come. But now you must make the sacrifice of relieving me for a little from the insipid flatteries of this illustrious dotard. My strength is exhausted, and I begin to feel the approach of the terrible moment when I must yawn in his very face, from nervous collapse."

Then Sophie formally introduced to me Herr Professor August von Schlegel, and gently pushed me, quite nonplussed, on to the sofa beside the sweetly smiling one, who immediately poured upon me a perfect shower of compliments, not, of course, without some reflex application to his own dear self.

Whilst I was busy examining curiously the coquettish little gentleman, I could not help repeating to myself, "How is it possible that this old coxcomb" —Schlegel was sixty years old—"that this parody of

a man, could sing Friederike Bethmann as 'Fairy-child' so charmingly, enchain for such a long time Madame de Staël, and translate Shakespeare so splendidly?"

Then I remembered a story I had often heard but never credited, that once a poet had embraced a little girl, saying, "Dear child, never forget this momentous hour, in which August Wilhelm von Schlegel kissed you," but I believe it now.

Schlegel lectured in Berlin at that period (May, 1827) on the History of Art; but he found more laughers than admirers.

There were many other distinguished persons at Berlin, which was peculiarly rich in literary life at that time, with whom I came in contact.

It causes me a sad pang when I think of the handsome, fair-haired, blue-eyed Swede, Dr. Christian Birch, who by his unhappy marriage with my colleague, Charlotte Pfeiffer, forfeited his diplomatic career, and later on even lost every moral support, so that he came to a melancholy end. I made his acquaintance at the Königstadt theatre, where he officiated as poetical privy counsellor behind the scenes. The prologue, which I recited on the occasion of the opening of the stage, was by Dr. Birch. He paid me the most tender respect. He lived mostly apart from his wife and daughter, and at last was dependent for support on the generosity of the many friends who knew how to value the amiable and witty companion. Only when he had become blind and perfectly helpless Frau Birch-Pfeiffer once more received him into her house. In it he died. He is the father of the novel-writer Wilhelmine von Hillern.

The historian and poet, Friedrich Förster, who was afterwards *Hofrath* and custodian of the Museum, I took a special interest in, as he was the early friend and companion in battle of Theodore Körner. In his capacity of *Gelegenheitsdichter* (occasional poet, court poet) he was the amanuensis of Duke Karl of Mecklenburg and Prince Anton Radziwill; and Förster frequently furnished the poetry for the festive plays at court in which I played a part. His spouse, Laura Gedicke, was an ornament of Zeller's *Sing-Akademie*. Both were engaged in the early production of Goethe's "Faust" in the Radziwill Palace.

But the most inexhaustible of all occasional poets of that remarkable period in the history of Berlin was Professor Gubitz, founder and professor of the Berlin art of wood engraving, publisher of the *Gesellschafter*, and author of many a merry comedy in which I acted. I have often met the busy man in society, and he never came without a *Festgedicht* (poem made for the festive occasion). Though they were only ephemeral, still they fulfilled their cheerful purpose in those days when people were not yet hypercritical. He had by it acquired the nickname of "Max Helfenstein." Frau Gubitz was a daughter of the great heroic actor Fleck, and of my colleague, Frau Fleck-Schröck, and had been an actress herself formerly. The house of Gubitz was, notwithstanding its modesty, an agreeably social one.

Like a fluttering many-coloured butterfly glides through my memory the young, happy, and frank Baron Franz von Gaudy, to whom Countess Hahn-Hahn never pardoned that he, the son of blue blood and playmate of royal princes, degraded his

pen to write the life of a "wandering journeyman-tailor."

Another of the pale poetic supernumeraries, of whom I have said already that they look as if they lived too fast or ate too little, who raved for art and artists, was Friedrich Tietz. He wrote at that time several comedies which passed over the royal stage without leaving much of an impression. His passion for the theatre caused him to become a theatrical manager himself by-and-by, which, however, proved the ruin of his once promising fortunes.

* * * * * *

Among the dramatists of the then Berlin, Ernst Raupach ruled the stage as absolute tyrant. And how I used to hate this harsh, gloomy, ugly man! because for me he seemed to have no friendly word, no encouraging look, and, above all, no *good part in his plays.*

As if dropped from the clouds, Raupach suddenly appeared in Berlin, in the fall of 1824, and became at once the general topic of conversation; he had already gained a certain reputation on the Berlin stage by his dramas "Die Fürsten Chawansky" and "Die Erdennacht," when he thus, in his repulsive ugliness and offensive roughness, appeared in person before the Berliners.

Raupach was but forty years old when I saw him first, but a motley life lay behind him already. As the son of a country clergyman he studied theology in Halle, and even then, when only a youth of nineteen, his character had formed for life, in all its harshness and bitterness. With a touching frankness the young student, in the bitter consciousness of his per-

sonal ugliness and unamiableness, writes to his elder brother, a tutor in Petersburg:—

"When I ceased to be a boy I lacked nothing but a teacher and a friend who could have gained my confidence; then, I am sure I should have been a true and active philanthropist. I undoubtedly was possessed of a good heart; I felt deeply and keenly, and had for every misfortune, even the remotest, tears of pity, and also the courage to help sometimes, even when it surpassed my strength. Now, if I had found a friend who had thought like me, and nourished these feelings within me, I should gradually, I am sure, have become a true man. But this friend I lacked; I was scorned and derided for my high-flown sentiments, until I became reserved and taciturn; I began to feel ashamed of these humane and generous feelings, and at the same time to despise the men who had ridiculed me for them.

"Thus I gradually began to think myself better than others, and the contempt I harboured for a few was gradually extended to many, indeed to almost all those with whom I came in contact. I never took the trouble to conciliate them, and to win their regard. The consequence is that I never, even to this day, have had a true friend, nor learned the art of making friends. I may succeed in gaining the esteem of men, but never their love. Nobody has loved me, I have loved nobody; man *must* love, so I loved myself; there I look for the ground of my self-love, which was (formerly especially) quite without bounds."

When twenty years old, Ernst Raupach, like his brother, went to Russia as tutor, and lived for some time both in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

When professor at the university of St. Petersburg Raupach married a beautiful and amiable governess, Cäcilie von Wiedermuth, a Swiss, but only a year afterwards was left a widower, and rendered all the more misanthropic and bitter through this blow of fate. St. Petersburg became hateful to him. Raupach went to Italy, and there, during the Congress of Verona, he wrote "Lebrecht Hirsemengel's, a German Schoolmaster's, Letters From and About Italy," full of wit and satire. This name, "Hirsemengel," stuck to poor Raupach very nastily, in Immermann's "Munchausen."

Thus Raupach, grimmer, gloomier, and bitterer than ever, had come to Berlin in the autumn of 1824.

His first errand was to the bureaux of the theatre. Without naming himself he handed the MS. of a comedy to the secretary Teichmann; but it was at once returned to him, with the remark that it was written in too small characters, and scarcely legible. He was told to present it again in a tidy copy.

Surly and cross, Raupach, after uttering some invectives in his own manner, left the office, intending to turn his back upon unappreciative Berlin and its theatre for ever; but the shrewd clerk of the theatre, Esperstedt, guessing from his very rudeness who the anonymous visitor was, hastened after him, and with a thousand apologies, begged back the illegible MS. It was the comedy, "Lasst die Todten ruhn," in which I had to play "Elise," a miserable secondary part. And so Raupach remained, and had soon risen to be the autocrat of the Berlin stage; tyrannizing absolutely over everybody, over the king and the court, the theatre intendant, stage-managers, artistes,

and audience. This dismally influential position, such as, perhaps, never yet dramatist attained on a stage, Raupach gained at one blow by his deeply affecting tragedy, "Isidor und Olga," which carried away, like a storm-wind, the whole of Berlin, in March, 1825, and had to be repeated numberless times. The general interest in the piece grew greater still when the rumour spread that the author had based the play upon facts he had himself witnessed in Russia. It was, at any rate, a fierce onslaught upon the accursed serfdom of "Holy Russia."

And with what perfection, nay, overpowering reality, the tragedy was played! Madame Stich, as "Olga," appeared milder and with more of youthful softness than her harsh character usually permitted. How she did electrify the audience by her passionate, "Ich lieb ihn ja" (I love him), addressed to the prince!

Krüger gave the prince with a kindling fire of mad passion, and with all the splendour of his magnificent voice.

Pius Alexander Wolff was a noble and sympathetic "Isidor;" but above all shone Ludwig Devrient, in the character of "Ossip," now moving to tears, then inspiring awe and horror, and always affecting, fascinating, captivating.

I shall never forget what a grand impression he produced in the great scene where he denounces the horrors of Russian serfdom. I hear, even now, the poor, crushed "Ossip"-Devrient, robbed of his whole happiness, degraded to a jester, relate to "Fedor" his story, demoniacal in his bitterness, till he speaks of his love to Axinia—and then, the rich warm heart breaks through, as the sun through

clouds, and seeks relief in tears, where he says, "My Axinia had eyes as sweet and blue as violets. Whenever I see violets since I must needs weep. She died when she was to bear me a child. God be thanked she took it with her to the grave. One serf less. Fedor, why dost thou not laugh at the silly jester Ossip?"

I too was delighted with "Isidor und Olga," and witnessed the again and again repeated piece with tearful enthusiasm. My only sorrow was that I had no part in it, and that Raupach, apparently, did not intend ever to favour me with an effective *rôle*.

In the extravagant farce, "Die Schleichhändler," Amalie Wolff shone as "Fräulein Kiekebusch," beside Gern, jun., as barber "Schelle," whilst I had to play the threadbare lover, "Julie von Harder." And the piece was very often produced even in the opera-house, because the little play-house was too small to contain the audience who were ready for a good laugh.

Raupach really was strikingly ugly. A long, thin, awkward figure in loose hanging clothes; he had spider-like arms and legs, with huge hands and feet. His thick hair stood stiff, like a brush, and unkempt on his angular head; his brow was low, his nose dumpy, his lips were like small sausages, his eyes possessed the so-called "false look," so that one never could tell in what direction he was looking.

One day, I said petulantly to Madame Dötsch —

"Did you ever in your life, see an uglier man than this Herr Professor? I once saw the image of an idol, cut roughly out of a block of wood; it was

called Vitzliputzli. When I see Raupach I am always reminded of this Vitzliputzli."

"Yet he is such a learned man, and writes such beautiful plays, and still mourns for his sweet spouse, whom he lost after so short a span of happiness," said my neighbour in a deprecating tone.

"Ah, she died so quickly, only in consequence of Vitzliputzli, I am sure," said I. "When I imagine those long, spider-like arms trying to embrace me, and those blue sausage lips to kiss me, I should fall dead with fear and horror, I am sure."

"What if I repeated this to the professor?"

"I don't mind. Vitzliputzli cannot give me worse parts to play, anyhow," I said, in desperation. "Moreover, I am seriously thinking of quitting a stage, at which the claim of seniority to parts rules as despotically as the corporal's stick in the army."

But how I was punished for my impatience and injustice! How did Vitzliputzli revenge himself on me!

Soon after this scene, one evening during the performance of "Rafaele," I sat alone in the parlour, waiting for my strangulation in the last act. I was dull, and thoughtfully disposed on other grounds; for just when I was going to the theatre there arrived from my brother Karl—the light-headed lieutenant—from Karlsruhe, one of his many letters to which we had been accustomed for some time; it was to the effect that the wild horseman had spoiled his third horse this year already, and sister Lina was to buy another one, and my mother and I were ourselves at a loss how to get on with decency in expensive Berlin.

Then I was awakened from my dull meditation by a friendly voice —

"Why is Ikekula so sad?"

I started up in a fright; Raupach stood before me.

"And you, Herr Professor, deign to notice my sadness, and—myself?" I said in a temper.

"Certainly; I have been watching your painful pensiveness for some time, now. You used to be so merry. And why should I—well, just I—not notice it?"

"Because I do not seem to exist for you, and your good parts," I blurted out.

"Do you think so?" he said roughly, whilst he took some large doses of snuff. "You may, after all, be mistaken. I am following your talent with great interest."

"And, meanwhile, you make this talent play the most tiresome parts; as for example, this wretched Ninias, and this insipid, melancholy Ikekula?" I said, laughing, but with a very sour laugh.

"But," he said, with the greatest self-control, "were you not 'called' as Ikekula, along with the other actors on its first representation?"

"Of course, merely from pity, because I was strangled; therefore the audience wanted to have another look at the famous Ikekula alive. And then you, Herr Professor, have found fault with Ikekula's death-cry, as being not quite natural. Weiss, the stage-manager, has told me. As if I could know how one cries when he is being strangled; that I have never yet experienced."

"Ei, ei, ei, I say, little Hotspur, you are quite beside yourself," the insufferable Vitzliputzli interrupted with his rough, dry laugh.

But I got into a more violent passion still:—

"Yes, you laugh; that is quite like you; and my heart is like to break, because you systematically ruin my talent and my position on the royal stage. You are unjust, Herr Professor, for you do not at all consider that a young talent requires to strive forward. You are partial; for beautiful, grateful parts you only write for older actresses of routine. Would it do any harm to Mesdames Stich and Unzelmann if they allowed me to have now and then a genial task to perform, in which I might test my talent and make progress? But you delight in spoiling my favour with the public, by allotting to me the smallest, most wretched, and absurdest parts. You wrong me greatly; but I won't bear it any longer; so much I owe to myself and my family. My brother Karl has, moreover, spoiled another riding-horse, and I am to buy another one for him, the third this year, and all this on 1,200 thalers of salary. No, I shall ask his Majesty to grant me my discharge, and I shall go to St. Petersburg, where I have the offer of a contract after a previous *début*, and there I shan't need to play parts like those of Ninias and Ikekula—I—I—" loud sobs drowned my voice.

Meanwhile Raupach had snuffed more and more violently, and his eyes were flashing wildly to the right and left. Now he took an enormous pinch, and said with strong emphasis —

"I am pleased to see that your cheery disposition is capable also of passionate emotion, for—for the three—new—beautiful characters I have in store for you—"

"How?—Do you want to add insult to injury?" I interrupted him vehemently.

"Will you please let me finish, you sputtering saltpetre!" Vitzliputzli cried harshly. "For the three—new—beautiful characters I have in view for you, as 'Malvine' in my new drama 'Vater und Tochter;' as 'Countess Flora von Tourelles' in the comedy 'Ritterwort;' and as 'Miss Mathilda Lindsey' in my 'Royalisten,' you will find strong feelings and their passionate expression of very great use."

"Three beautiful—new—parts for me—really in view for me, my most adored Herr Professor? How shall I thank you? Oh, now, do also prove to me that you pardon my ill temper I showed just now, by kindly going over these three beautiful new parts together with me."

"Certainly, most willingly. But 'Ikekula' is wanted on the stage."

No "Ikekula' ever suffered her strangulation with so much pleasure as I did that night.

And peace between Raupach and myself was concluded for all time. When we met in the theatre, or in company, he always had a friendly word, an instructive hint, a good advice for the young actress; and I had entirely forgotten Vitzliputzli and his ugliness. Nay, if anybody had told me that Raupach was as beautiful as Apollo, I should not have demurred to it.

Then when the parts were copied out, and "Malvine" and the "Gräfinn Flora von Tourelles" were in my happy hands, Raupach one evening came to take tea at our house, and to go over my part with me. I saw with astonishment how smartly the professor had dressed himself. He wore a blue dress-coat with gold

buttons *à la mode*, faultless gloves, a carefully-tied white cravat, his high shirt-collar higher and stiffer than ever, and his bristly hair even dressed and pomaded like a young lieutenant—or a suitor.

During tea Raupach was as mild, confiding, and amiable as, indeed, he could be, considering his cross and reserved disposition. His terrible, grim coldness gradually melted away.

Then I recited to him my part as "Malvine," in the drama "Vater und Tochter," adapted from an English novel. When I came to the passionate concluding scene the poet cried "Brava! brava!" and the audience repeated the same during the performance.

I was, I might call it, quite enamoured of my part of "Flora von Tourelles" in "Ritterwort." Raupach had written the play, and especially the dumb knight, for Pius Alexander Wolff, when the latter was laid up with throat consumption, and was not allowed to speak, and yet longed so much once more to tread the stage. But Wolff's strength was insufficient even for this silent part, which, in consequence, was laid aside until the death of the artist. It was acted for the first time on the 3rd of November, 1828, with tremendous success. Rubenstein gave the silent knight in a simple and noble style, Madame Unzelmann the heartless coquette, who had made the knight vow not to speak for a certain number of years. I appeared at first in a charming page's costume, hovering around the beloved knight like a guardian angel. The scene was especially well received in which I picture to myself how the voice of the adored man would sound if he were not dumb. "Like the song of the nightingale when

he sings sweet songs of love?—No, it will sound like the rolling thunder!"

Raupach came more and more frequently to our house, and said with perfect frankness how comfortable he felt with mother and daughter at our cosy little tea-table; and I found the strange hypochondriac, in whom a rough shell covered a noble kernel, more and more lovable.

In the spring of 1829 Raupach went with me over the part of "Miss Mathilda Lindsey" in his "Royalisten." Then he, one evening, told a very sad story of his sweet wife, who had now been lying these many years buried on the banks of the distant Neva; of her naively cheerful character, her simplicity, her dark locks, deep blue eyes, and her sweet flower-face.

"Oh, how beautiful and lovely your Cäcilie must have been, and how—" I stopped, embarrassed.

Raupach supplemented me with a half-rougish, half-sad smile.

"And how could so lovely a creature marry so ugly, gloomy an idol as Vitzliputzli! Yes, you are right. But love is blind—and I did not make my Cäcilie unhappy."

There I sat, burning with shame and repentance. Then I sprang up, heartily clasped Raupach in my arms, and with tears in my eyes I pleaded,—

"For goodness' sake, don't revive that! Do forgive the rash words of the childish Lina, and the passionate artiste who believed herself put in the background by you, and who has become so fond of you long ago."

Then I felt a warm kiss upon my brow, and the

long arms embracing me heartily, and a troubled voice whispered into my ear,—

"And you really are not dead on the spot, because these spider-arms touch you; and I might perhaps hope—"

I should have liked to have answered with a slight variation of "Franziska," in "Minna von Barnhelm,—"

"Herr Professor, Herr Professor, do you not need a fair Frau Professorin?"

But my destiny was already decided, and I bound in another way.

My prudent mother interrupted this tender scene by a cooling jest.

On the 9th of April, 1829, I played with enjoyment, and most successfully, in the "Royalisten" along with Ludwig Devrient and Amalie Wolff. Only twice was I to repeat the beloved part of "Miss Mathilda;" indeed, it was my last but one new character upon the Berlin stage. Then, in May, I followed my evil star to England.

Raupach has written many, many more plays for the stage, altogether one hundred and seventeen—thus, nineteen more than the prolific Kotzebue—most of which were performed in Berlin.

When, as time went on, there arose more and more grumbling voices both in the public and among the critics about the everlasting Raupach and the everlasting "Hohenstaufen," the poet wrote a drama of every-day life, called "Die Geschwister," under the *nom de plume* of Leutner, to let his foes see that he was not merely a favourite of the court, and of the

"Intendanz,"[1] and that he did not owe his success to his name alone; and he did prove it, for "Die Geschwister," by Leutner, met with even greater success than the last play by Raupach.

Three years after this successful experiment, however, in 1840, Raupach's farce, "1740, oder die Eroberung von Grüneberg," failed so terribly, that the author threw away his pen in disgust for ever.

He remained, nevertheless, in his old favour at court. He read lectures on history to the Prince and Princess of Prussia. During the literary tea-evenings of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV. he had his place assigned to him beside Alexander von Humboldt.

Afterwards, in St. Petersburg, Dresden, and in other places, I played many a congenial character of Raupach's plays, and exchanged many a friendly greeting with the poet from a distance.

With astonishment, but then also with joy, I heard in Switzerland, in 1848, that Raupach, though then sixty-two years old, had espoused my former colleague, Pauline Werner, who, in my time, had played children's parts, and that he was quite rejuvenated in this happy matrimony.

Pauline Werner was a gentle, fair, clever girl, but insignificant as an actress. On the other hand, she was rather successful as a dramatic authoress; she wrote under the initials A. P. In Dresden I played with satisfaction in her piece "Noch ist es Zeit."

After this sunny, though short bliss, of a peaceful evening of life, Raupach died in Berlin, March, 1852. It was said of his widow, as late as 1870 (during the Franco-German war), that she distinguished herself in

[1] Royal management.

acts of charity and the care of the sick and wounded. How gladly would I have been in her place, free from my devilish bonds!

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Good Teichmann did at last, after all, get reconciled to me and my risibility. When, in November, 1834, after an absence of five years, I returned to Berlin, in the quality of imperial Russian ex-court actress, and appeared on the royal stage in fifteen performances, Teichmann was among the admirers, who had charmingly decked my dressing-room with flowers as a welcome.

Teichmann continued for many years more to devote, in the quality of Privy Secretary and "Hofrath," his art, enthusiasm, and his faithful labour to the Berlin stage, under the "Intendants" Counts Brühl and Redern, Theodor von Kürtner, and Von Hülsen. On the 6th of July, 1860, the old art-enthusiast died.

Also Comedy-Schultz welcomed me back with his old favour in the *Spenersche Zeitung*, at the period referred to. He wrote regarding my first two appearances as follows:—

"Royal Play-house. Monday, 10th November, 1834. 'Die junge Pathe;' comedy in one act, adapted from the French of L. W. Both by Louis Schneider. Followed by 'Die Hagestolzen' by Iffland. Mdlle. Bauer appeared in the first piece in the part of Frau von Lucy, and in the second as Margarethe.

"A very numerous audience had assembled to welcome once more the pleasant reappearance of a bygone beautiful time in which she had once been the fragrant flower of a green wreath, which, with its delicate

golden art-blossoms had so often refreshed and elevated the heart and spirit of the multitude. Beautiful but also melancholy reminiscences are connected with her reappearance, for during her absence of but five years many blossoms of that *artist-wreath have sunk into the grave; and also the most beautiful ornament of it*, Ludwig Devrient, had ceased to bloom and spread fragrance about him.

"Our guest was received with enthusiastic cheering, and her play as Frau von Lucy in the first piece was followed by the audience with lively interest. She gave a capital reading of the part, without the employment of violent means, elegantly, and without outraging womanliness. Altogether, it was an agreeable sensation to see thus, once more displayed before our eyes, a pure art-creation with talent and consistency, such as unfortunately we are no longer accustomed to, or if we take into our heads to see such a picture, it is first painted for us as a *caput mortuum* to make it gaudy and striking. In the second piece we were very much gratified that Mdlle. Bauer, in the character of Margarethe, did not mistake, as is unfortunately commonly done, the coarse for the natural, and understood how to moderate the sentimental in an artistic manner, and to blend it so successfully with the naïve that her performance appeared as if cast in one mould.

"From these scanty remarks, and if it be not too rash to draw a conclusion from only two parts, one can see already that Mdlle. Bauer has greatly improved, so far as art is concerned, and has become indeed an artiste of the first rank; for her play appeared thoroughly and artistically intellectual, without

mannerism, and without having recourse to the violent, unnatural, and unartistic means which outrage womanliness.

"She was called before the curtain with Herr Lemm, and returned thanks with modesty."

With Louis Schneider I played the "Young Godchild," the same *rôle* which afterwards I represented more effectively still, with the young, amiable Hermann Hendrichs, in Hanover, who visited me repeatedly in Dresden, and showed me warm attachment all the time I continued on the stage.

Also the author of "Alexander and Darius," Friedrich von Uechtritz, I saw again several times in Dresden, at Ludwig Tieck's house. He was living in Düsseldorf at that time, in great intimacy with Immermann, who conducted the stage of that place. Both made themselves extremely popular by their artistic soirées, and contributed no little towards the improvement of taste in the pleasant artist-city on the Rhine.

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After the theatrical, may I be permitted to sketch also the musical Berlin of my time—of that Berlin which the then world-renowned violin-virtuoso Boucher, chamber-musician to the King of Spain, gratefully called "*la capitale de la musique!*"

Boucher, who styled himself the "Socrates of violinists," absorbed the interest of Berlin almost as much as Paganini did a few years later. Boucher's attractiveness did not, however, consist solely in his violin; it resided, perhaps, even more, in his striking likeness to Napoleon I., which the virtuoso was not slow to capitalize abundantly. When his fiddle paused

during the concert, Boucher immediately posed in one of the postures in which Napoleon was best known through the medium of cheap engravings, such as "Napoleon after the battle of Marengo," "Austerlitz," "Waterloo," "Napoleon upon the smouldering ruins of Moscow," "Napoleon in St. Helena," &c., &c. And the people of Berlin cheered his stage trick ever anew.

When Prince August once expressed to the virtuoso his admiration at this resemblance, Boucher said unabashed, "Only I am a little handsomer, my prince, than the emperor."

Nor did the artist disdain other tricks to make people talk of him, and fill his benefit concerts. Thus, he played some pieces with the violin upon his head, or held behind his back.

During a concert given for charitable ends, which he gave in connection with Karl Maria von Weber, the latter, who played the piano, had to pause for a few seconds during a short violin solo. But Boucher extended this to a fantasia on the most favourite airs from "Freischütz." The audience listened in breathlessness. The embarrassed Weber, in a whisper, requests the player to come to an end; at last, he interposes a thundering piano-accord—in vain. Boucher continues his fantasias on the Freischütz, finishing with the waltz that gradually dies away behind the scenes; then he throws away his fiddle and rushes at Weber, whom he passionately clasps in his arms—the audience is beyond itself in ecstacy.

One day, Boucher is enjoying a walk in the Thiergarten. Near the Zelte he sees a blind fiddler leaning against a tree; but the well-dressed people go past him without throwing a gift into the hat at the feet of

the poor man. Then Boucher empties his purse into the hat of the fiddler, takes the wretched fiddle from his hands, places himself *à la Napoléon* beside the blind man, and plays for hours, to the delight of the passing promenaders, who gather around him in ever-increasing numbers, till the hat of the blind man is filled. Of course, Boucher's next concerts were more crowded than ever.

And forty years later I read in a Paris paper —

"An old man, penniless, implores some generous person to buy his violin. *Signed*, Boucher, *ci-devant* violinist to the King of Spain."

A little later, he who had once rolled in gold, died in the most abject poverty. This, too often the fate of great artists, is, alas, too often also self-earned!

As for the most celebrated of all violin players of those days, Nicolo Paganini, I came into personal contact likewise with him in Berlin. He, a man of about forty-five, arrived in Berlin from Vienna towards the end of February, 1829, and the strangest reports were circulating already in the town, before anybody had seen or heard him. People called him a demon, a magician, a wizard, in league with Satan; one who had for ever given himself up to his Satanic majesty through a murder, and who in return had received the "wonder-violin" (Wunder-Geige), from which the magic bow drew forth sounds such as no honest hand of man had ever produced.

Others even asserted that the victim of the murder had been his own wife, and that her sighs and laments continued to sound forth for ever from his violin into his ears, for his punishment on earth. That was his atonement.

Others knew, from Vienna journals and letters, *for certain* (!) "a murder he did commit, *that is as sure as anything*, but not on his wife, for he was never married, but on a rival whom his mistress had favoured; and for this crime he has had to languish for six years in a dark subterranean dungeon in Genoa, without seeing or hearing a human being during this whole period. On his pressing entreaty his violin was left to him, and to it he confided his sorrow. But one string snapped after the other, without his being able to repair or replace them, and, at last, only the G string was left to him. And so he learned to play upon this one string, and produce the most remarkable sounds. It was said that he could, on this string, mew like a cat, scream like a quarrelling old hag of a wife, but also sing like a bird, ring like a silver bell, and weep like a human heart, so that even the most callous listener would shed tears of the most heart-felt compassion.

Enough; Berlin was in feverish expectation of Nicolo Paganini, whose bizarre pictures were exhibited in the shop windows, bearing the proud subscription, "Der Unerreichbare" (the unapproachable).

But the ordinary rehearsals only baulked the curiosity of other artists, for Paganini did not play during the rehearsals, he only timed his part.

At last, on the 4th of March, 1829, arrived the night of his first concert, and the whole of the wealthy part of Berlin, who were able to pay the treble prices, streamed into the concert-hall of the royal play-house, and I had to play during the same hours, and within the same house, "Irene" in Beck's old satirical comedy "Das Chamäleon," of course to a half-empty house.

After the first act, the cast—Ludwig Devrient in the character of a *cavalier du vieux régime*, Amalie Wolff as old coquette, Wauer as squire, Krüger in a military character, and I, as merry heroine—were gathered together, much disappointed, our subject of conversation, of course, being the magician Paganini, who had carried off all our audience, at the same time envying those who were now listening to him.

The scene-painter Gropius, in great excitement, and with a face beaming and glowing with delight, came rushing up, crying —

"Children, I have heard him. He fiddles like a god—yes, but like a demon too. Our Berliners are out of their minds. Such applause has never been heard before."

"You?—Paganini?—where?—How?" we cried, in confusion.

"Behind there, to the right at the end of the passage, there is a small door for the members of the orchestra, to allow them to proceed straight to the concert-hall from the theatre. There you can hear the prodigy through the key-hole."

In a trice I am there to listen, and to be astounded. Were those really the tones of a violin? Such sounds I had never heard before. My colleagues followed me, till the ting-ting for the second act called us back to the flies. But every unoccupied minute we spent at the wondrous key-hole, as if spellbound. Methinks I hear even now Ludwig Devrient say —

"That is no wooden violin, that is the wailing and weeping from a poor lacerated human breast. I would that I could command such tones as King Lear."

Thus I heard Paganini without having seen him.

A few days later I was also to see him, and even to speak with him, but without hearing his violin.

I was looking for the *régisseur* of the opera, the composer and comedy writer, Karl Blum, in the opera-house, in order to speak to him about my part in the spectacle. I found him in the parlour, in conversation with a stranger, who struck me at first sight. Was it the repulsive ugliness of this haggard man, who seemed only to consist of olive-coloured skin and rattling bones? The black clothes he wore were literally dangling about this skeleton. His gait was languid, as if the whole bone fabric must collapse the next moment and drop at least some of its joints. His face looked like a mummy head, covered with a brown skin; his cheeks were hollow; from the deep sockets of his eyes shone forth dismal, black fire; long thin hair in ringlets enframed like serpents this death's head. It suggested to me the Erynnys or Furies, in Schiller's "Kraniche des Ibicus." Others, afterwards, have compared this ghastly head with that of John the Baptist upon Herodias' charger.

This dismal, nay, absolutely ghastly, person could only be Paganini.

And beside him, what a contrast!—upon the arm of a nurse, an angelic, beautiful, sweet slumbering child, at which Paganini during the conversation cast the tenderest of looks.

Karl Blum introduced the maestro to me. In my embarrassment I turned to the lovely child, stroked its dark little locks, and kissed its cheeks that were warm and moist with sleep. Then Paganini impetuously seized my hand, lifted it hurriedly but rather awkwardly to his lips, and said in broken French —

"Is he not a sweet, innocent angel? This pure mouth, the peaceable smile, this enviable repose. This charming child, indeed, is my whole happiness, the joy and the charm of my poor life, my dear only son, Achill."

The story was told in Berlin at that time that the child's mother was the cantatrice Antonia Bianchi, with whom Paganini travelled on his professional tour through Germany, and who but a year ago sang in his Vienna concert; that she had left lover and child because she could not bear the neighbourhood of the dismal fiddler any longer.

And then I heard and saw Paganini play in the crowded opera-house, because the concert hall of the theatre, in spite of several concerts already given, could not contain the crowds of people attracted.

He appeared and made his awkward, ungraceful bows, and the people laughed. He took up his violin, and the thousand-headed multitude listened breathless, as if under enchantment. He dropped his bow, and a perfect tempest of cheers and clapping of hands raged through the house, such as I have never witnessed, not even during the most triumphant performances of Henriette Sontag.

How did Paganini play? Now like an angel, now like a demon—never like a mortal man. Such sounds assuredly have never yet been drawn from a violin. In fact they were no real violin sounds; they sounded like the roaring of the storm, like the surging of the sea, like the ringing of the trombone, like the thunder of battle, like the chimes of a bell, or the song of a bird, like the anguish and despair of man, like

moaning and sighing, and whining and weeping. And when his G string wailed then tears came through the eyes from the listening hearts of men, tears of sadness and delight. His performance had the effect of flashes of lightning in a dark night.

Whilst he played a nervous tremor went through his whole frame, shaking, thin and spectre-like as it was, and from his gloomy eyes there flashed a deeply seated raging fire. With the last stroke of the bow the player sank completely exhausted upon his chair.

His technique in the purest chromatic *roulades*, his wonderfully clear intonation, even in humorous bizarreries, his broken accords across all the four strings, from the lowest depth up to the giddiest height, his flageolet passages, his enrapturing *pizzicato* play, whilst the bow was simultaneously playing wonderful melodies, his rapid octave playing upon the G string, his silvery clear chime of bells, his *fortissimo* which drowned the whole of the orchestra, followed immediately by the sweetest, most charming *pianissimo*, all that was inconceivable or incomprehensible, and therefore also indescribable.

Even the best violinists of Berlin shook their heads and said, "We do not comprehend it; that is superhuman. If we had not heard and seen this performance, we should not believe it."

Then Berlin's musical oracle, Ludwig Rellstab, in his criticism in the *Vossische Zeitung*, pronounced these enthusiastic words: "I have heard it, but still I do not believe it. It should be known that all we have heard hitherto of the conquest of mechanical difficulties on any instrument whatsoever vanishes into nothingness compared with what Paganini per-

forms. One could have expressed astonishment at Bernhard Bromberg, Moscheles, Kalkbrenner, Drouet, &c., but, at the same time, we should have seen the possibility of executing the same feats, nay, we need not even despair of ultimately rivalling them; but in the case of Paganini comprehension fails, and some of his performances remain a total puzzle to the writer, as well—he may add to his comfort—as to the professional players themselves. The difficulties which distinguished virtuosos are wont to emphasize especially, and which they mark as the most brilliant part of their performance, one hardly notices with Paganini, because he seems literally to rest himself on them." And Rellstab prophesied in conclusion, that "all future violinists would be pygmies compared with this giant."

Even cross-grained old Zelter, who at first would not believe in the art of this "wizard's son," was carried away by Paganini. He expressed himself thus in a letter to Goethe,—

"Paganini is, in any case, in the highest degree a perfect master of his instrument. The fellow is a real rarity, a violin himself. One is startled, one laughs, one trembles at his dangerous temerities, of which the difficulties are patent to any one, for the impression is quite universal. Nor are gracefulness and genius wanting, and even what is not a perfect success is yet new and interesting."

Some months after that, Goethe likewise heard the prodigy-fiddler in Weimar. He calls his play "meteoric," "a pillar of flames and clouds."

And the enthusiastic Rahel wrote after Paganini's very first concert in Berlin, to Varnhagen in Bonn,—

"I maintain that Paganini plays better upon a single string, than upon all. More correctly, more surely, purer, homelier, and bolder; and therefore with most humour, with the most dramatic expression. His story may be what it may; so much I feel certain of, that he was for a considerable time in the possession of a violin with only one string. Upon this instrument, properly speaking, he does *not* play the violin. He has not Rode's tone, nor Durand's, nor Haake's, nor Gionorvich's. But he literally *speaks*; he whines; he imitates sea-storms, stillness of night, birds that descend from heaven, but not such as fly heavenward; in short, it is poesy. He plays Rossini's 'Preghiera' from Mosé; all the voices as they join in gradually, and then all together—it is the music of the spheres—and I swear that I was compelled always to repeat over it the harper's song, 'Wer nie sein Brod,' to shudder and to cry. It was he himself. And now enough. The pit was not predisposed to applaud, but was forced to it. I have seen those in front of me, who hissed when he first appeared, break forth into applause; the court, everybody, clapped their hands furiously. He furnished wonderment for everybody, or at any rate astonishment. He looks at once old, afflicted, starved, and merry. A mixture of Oken, Wiesel, and my Jew old-clothes-man; his *ensemble* coming nearest to the last-mentioned. His bows were of the most primitive description. Everybody laughed, he too. A little pantomime mixed up with it, but on the whole, modest."

About his history, and how he came to play upon one string, Paganini preserved a very prudent and mystical silence in Berlin. There could be, of course,

no more effective advertisement imaginable for his concerts than these dismal stories.

Only afterwards, when he had finished his touring, and had retired with his son Achill and the millions he had fiddled together, to his villa Gajona, near Parma, Paganini related some passages of his life, in which, however, nothing whatsoever appears about murder or dungeon.

His father, a small tradesman in Genoa, became very early aware that he had in his little Nicolo a musical prodigy, and also a good milch-cow. With the most cruel severity, he compelled the poor child to incessant practice on the violin, thus robbing the boy of health and life enjoyment. The young virtuoso was exhibited by his father at every public or private concert at which money was to be gained, with the consequence that the selfish father was bitterly hated by his son. The lad, after his father's death, like a released slave, rushed with wild delight into every kind of frantic dissipation, with the result that before he was a man he had destroyed his weakly constitution for life.

The Princess Elisa Bacciochi, who had received the princedom of Lucca-Piombino from her brother Napoleon, appointed Paganini, when only twenty-one years old, her court virtuoso and director of festivities. About this time Paganini relates,—

"I conducted the opera in Lucca, before the princely family; and was, besides, frequently invited to join the court circle, where I gave a concert every fortnight. Princess Elisa always retired before it commenced, because the sound of my violin affected her nerves too much. As compensation for this, an amiable young

person, whom I had been secretly admiring for some time past, and who was never tired of attending these concerts, gave me ground for hoping that she returned my affection. At last the hope became certainty, and our mutual passion grew more and more, and even the weighty reasons we had for keeping it secret only served to augment it.

"I once promised this lady to offer her a musical tribute, which should have reference to our secret understanding, and accordingly I announced at court a new composition, entitled 'Love scene.' The curiosity of my audience was greatly stirred when they saw me enter the saloon with a violin strung only with two cords, the G cord and the fifth; the latter was to produce the feelings of a young girl, the former the passionate language of the lover. In this manner I represented a dialogue in which the tones of the purest tenderness alternated with fits of jealousy, and harmonious wailings and tender accords with expressions of wrath and joy, of pain and happiness. Then came the complete reconciliation; and a *pas de deux*, which the lovers executed at last, formed the brilliant finale. This new idea met with much acceptance among my audience, not to mention the tender looks which the lady of my heart directed towards me. After Princess Elisa had overwhelmed me with praises, she said to me, graciously, 'You make possible the impossible; would not, in order to shine, *one* string suffice you?'

"I immediately promised also to make this attempt. In fact, this thought had got a complete hold of my imagination. Some weeks after that I composed my Napoleon sonata for the fourth cord only, and executed it on the 15th of August, before a numerous and

brilliant court. The result surpassed by boldest expectations, and my preference for the G cord dates from this time. People never seemed to tire of listening to the pieces I had composed for this string, and I acquired every day more skill in this kind of production." That sounds quite natural.

Excepting during the concerts, Paganini was little seen in public during his stay in Berlin. It was said that he spent his time during the day in the most extreme prostration on his couch, and the night at the faro-table. He suffered from nervous debility. Nobody would sit (or, I should say, cared to dine) with him at the *table d'hôte*, because he used to chew his meat, and then spit it out in a most disgusting manner. The most incredible stories were told of his frightful avarice.

Once more I saw Paganini and his beautiful boy basking in the Thiergarten during the most beautiful spring-weather, both were playing with flowers which the nurse was gathering in the grass. Then our walks in life led us out into the wide world, and asunder, almost at the same time,—him to new golden triumphs, me into a golden cage. The innocent child only noticed the flowers of life, as in a golden dream.

Then I read in the papers, years afterwards, that Paganini had died in Nizza, on the 27th of May, 1840, after long and fearful sufferings; but the restless when alive was not to find rest even in death; the clergy refused him a Christian burial because he had not received the last sacrament. The unhappy son had to take his father's body by sea to Villafranca, then to his country-house, Polcevera, near Genoa; but the bishop of Genoa also refused his consent to the inter-

ment, and the coffin stood for years above the earth in the villa. There, night after night, heart-rending violin-tones were heard, till the son arranged for a splendid mass for the peace of his father's soul, and made large bequests to the church. Then the spectral wailings of the violin were no longer heard at the coffin of Paganini, and the bishop of Parma at last permitted the body, after five years' wandering, to be taken to Parma and buried in the neighbourhood of the villa Gajona in May, 1845.

When I read all that, I could not help thinking of this greatest and most unhappy of violinists, and of his poor, rich son, whom I had seen for the last time, as an innocent child, playing with flowers, he and his father, seated in the sun.

Yes indeed, life and the human heart are fearfully full of the most striking contrasts.

* * * * * *

There were, at that time, in Berlin three houses especially which were the leaders in matters of music: those of Zelter, Mendelssohn, and Beer-Meyerbeer. With all three of them I have come in friendly contact.

Zelter, who was then not far from seventy, I met at the house of his daughter, Frau Rintel, in whose house, opposite the Königstadt theatre, we lived on our first coming to Berlin. Dr. Rintel was a physician with a large practice. His son afterwards published Zelter's biography.

Old Zelter was tall, powerful and sturdy, seeing whom one could easily believe, as was the case, that he had once been a working mason; he had intelligent, marked features, and blue eyes. A real Berlin

original, very rough, even coarse, bristly like a shoe-brush, snappish and surly as a bear, full of whims and caprices, but true as gold. When he grew warm in a conversation on music, and his strong, rugged thoughts became fluid, then one could understand why Goethe was so fond of his intercourse, called him friend and brother, and wrote him so many tender letters about music, poetry, theatre, and friendship. But old Zelter's eye would glow in a holy fire of the most affectionate love and enthusiasm whenever the mere name of his "sweet, divine friend" in Weimar was mentioned, who, he said, was as necessary to him as the morning light.

On Sundays it was sometimes my privilege to dine with the Rintels, and I had always to sit beside him. He was fond of hearing my cheerful chat and laugh, and he himself, otherwise so earnest a man, who hated noisy parties on a large scale, and who could not forgive his daughter for a long time for having by stratagem forced him into giving a ball at his own house, in order to play a trick upon her celebrated father; old Zelter often relaxed in this homely little circle, and related the merriest stories, which he gave splendidly with his rough humour.

For example, how he was taken for a disciple of Pestalozzi once, and fêted as such. It was during a journey which he undertook in 1809 to Königsberg, where the Prussian royal family were living, having been driven away from Berlin. Queen Luise, during that time of affliction, lived entirely in and for Pestalozzi's method of education, the adoption of which for Prussia, she believed, was the only means of securing the happiness and blessing of her people.

Hardly had Zelter arrived in Königsberg when he received a visit from "Kirchenrath" Busolt, one of the most zealous Pestalozzians, who bids him warmly welcome, and invites him to dinner for the following day. There Zelter finds a festive company, who show him the highest honour, call him "Herr Doctor," and never touch upon music, but constantly speak of Pestalozzi, his disciples, and his method, till the Berlin music-master grows tired of it, and says in his unvarnished frankness,—"But, gentlemen, I should say that Mr. Pestalozzi has been commented on more than enough in all directions, at least I should be grateful if you did not just address your Pestalozzi talk directly to me. Pestalozzi engages my interest hardly more than a fugue by Bach can interest you. What now if I were constantly to bother you with remarks on Bach and Händel?"

A universal blank terror and silence. Then "Kirchenrath" Busolt ventured to say shyly, "But, my most honoured doctor, you, the favourite disciple of the great Pestalozzi. . ."

"Go away with your 'doctor and favourite pupil of Pestalozzi.' The devil may be his favourite pupil. I don't know the fellow at all. I was a mason's apprentice, and the pupil of the excellent Music-director Fasch in Berlin, and I am now his successor as director of the Singing Academy."

Still longer faces, then the humble-mouthed question,—"Then you are not Dr. Zeller, who has been appointed to reform the Prussian National Schools, and whom we have been expecting with longing these several days?"

Thus the misunderstanding was cleared up in merriment.

Another story of Zelter's, one which only he could give properly, was: One evening, soon after the epoch-making first performance of Weber's "Freischütz," in 1822, he was returning home, lost in musical thoughts, when, in front of him a shoemaker's apprentice sang indefatigably, very loud, but quite wrong, the verse, "Wir winden dir den Jungfernkranz," but not another line, only always repeating the same, till at last, behind him, Zelter's strong bass voice joins in angrily: "Mit veilchenblauer Seide." Then the lad turned round, saying pertly,—

"I say, my little man, if you want to sing 'the beautiful green Maidenwreath' then you may also start it for yourself. Otherwise it is street robbery!"

Another merry story speaks of Zelter's rough originality. Next door to him there lived a certain Mdlle. Niqué, who sang every morning and evening with the voice of a cornet, "To see my Romeo," and nearly drove the old man to despair. Thus he once, during one of her singings, jumps furiously off his chair, where he sat working, and darts into the room of his daughters Dorothea, Rosamunde, and Luise, who are just receiving a music-lesson. Zelter seizes the unsuspecting music-master by the shoulders, shakes him, and roars into his ear,—

"Sir, will you procure a husband for Mdlle. Niqué? If not, I am lost!"

The teacher rushes away greatly alarmed, and the dreadful news runs through all Berlin: "Zelter has gone out of his mind."

I was allowed to be present at two Zelter festivals, the laying of the foundation-stone for the new building of his beloved "Sing-Academie" in the summer of 1825, and Zelter's 70th birthday on the 11th of December, 1828, for which Goethe had sent a long festive-poem in honour of the "Bauenden, Dichtenden, Singenden" and a "Tischlied" (glee).

One musical evening I have specially cherished in memory which I was permitted to spend with the old master, together with Ludwig Berger and Felix Mendelssohn, and two lovely young singers, pupils of Zelter's and the "Sing-Academie;" Berger played with his and Zelter's most renowned pupil, Felix Mendelssohn, a sonata by Beethoven *à quatre mains*, and how? I had never heard such piano playing before. Then young Mendelssohn, who was still almost a boy, played a fantasia on a theme suggested to him by Zelter, with the freshness of spring, like the murmuring of streams and the warbling of the lark. Zelter with his stiff fingers accompanied the singing of a remarkably pale lady, who sang his beautiful compositions to Goethe's "Rastlose Liebe" and "Der König in Thule," in an alto voice; even to-day I prefer these settings of Goethe's poems to any other. Prior to the singing of the ballad, "Der König in Thule" Zelter said to the songstress,—"Imagine you sit alone on the sea shore, and that you are singing out as in a dream the tale of the king in Thule, onward, away over the waves, into the far distance, gentle and free; the last sound must die away in the distance sadly, as if sinking into the sea."

After that Zelter fetched from his collections of

MSS. some rare pieces of old sacred music, and played them in mighty accords.

Felix Mendelssohn was two years younger than I; and then, sixteen years old, the most charming, most amiable youth one can imagine. With his beautiful pure face, the long hair of dark locks, the good, intelligent eyes, and the fresh, sweet mouth, he might have served as model for a picture of Benjamin, whilst Zelter would have made a capital patriarch Jacob.

The relations between teacher and pupil indeed were quite patriarchal. Zelter addressed Felix familiarly by thou and thee, and the latter hung with silent reverence on the lips of the master. Only at table, when sitting beside me, his natural vivacity burst forth, and we were soon busy jesting and laughing, so that Zelter nodded to us with a pleasant smile, saying —

"It is pleasant to see young eyes sparkling like rubies. Pity that at old Zelter's house a dance cannot be got up."

During the following years I often danced with Felix. When a student at the Berlin University he was an exceedingly nice partner; "an accomplished storm of wind," as Rahel called one of his compositions of that period.

At the early age of fifteen Felix had composed already three operas which were performed in the house of the Mendelssohns. On the occasion of the completion of the three-act comic opera, "Der Onkel aus Boston," Zelter said to him—"Felix, till to-day you were my apprentice; now you have

worthily accomplished your journeyman piece; henceforth work for the mastership." And he did become a master, although not exactly in operatic compositions. His taste for operas was spoiled in him for ever when his new opera, "Die Hochzeit des Kamacho"—the words for which had been written by a son of the Brunswick theatrical director, Klingemann, at its first, and last, representation in public in the Berlin play-house, on the 29th of April, 1827—was received so coldly, and when the young composer had besides experienced all kinds of chicanery from the theatrical world. Music-director-general Spontini treated him and his opera with an aristocratic, compassionate look of patronage, pointed to the dome of the French church at the Gensdarmen Markt, and said—"Mon ami, il vous faut des idées grandes comme cette coupole!"

And yet! When the *grandes idées* of the spiteful maestro, and the anvil, trombone, and tamtam noise of his monstrous operas shall have been long forgotten, the world will still listen with rapture to the warm, heart-felt tones of Felix Mendelssohn.

Nor is Saphir quite without blame that Mendelssohn, who was even then, at the age of eighteen, busy writing his immortal overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream," never again seriously attempted operas. Saphir's *Schnellpost* brought out the most cutting notice of the opera, "Die Hochzeit des Kamacho," and its composer. Zelter cried angrily —"Long live genius! To the devil with all criticism!"

Most charming were the little concerts which took place every Sunday morning in the house of the

Mendelssohns, and at which the compositions of Felix were mostly played.

The young composer conducted a small, select orchestra; his highly talented sister Fanny, afterwards the wife of the poetical painter Hensel, sat at the grand piano; Eduard Devrient sang; and the *élite* of musical Berlin, Zelter at their head, constituted the critical public. Also the most celebrated virtuosi and foreign singers who came to Berlin deemed it an honour to make their *début* in these concerts.

For the birthdays of their parents Felix and his brother and sisters, Paul, Fanny, and Rebecca, and the friends of the house generally, prepared little musical or theatrical surprises. On the occasion of a masquerade of that kind Felix, then seventeen years old, appeared as a Tyrolese, and presented to the other masked persons a little raffle from which they drew sweetmeats and verses which he himself had made.

For the last time I saw Felix Mendelssohn, then twenty years old, when he conducted in the "Sing-Academie," on the 11th of March, 1829, Bach's great Passion of St. Matthew, which nobody yet had ventured to perform—not even Zelter—like a young demi-god.

Immediately afterwards he went to England as a fame-crowned maestro. Although I followed him thither a few weeks later, yet I was not permitted "for state reasons" to come into contact with him. When in May, 1836, I performed in Leipzig, during a starring visit, Felix Mendelssohn, director of the famous Gewandhaus concerts, was sojourning on the Rhine and Main for the purpose of performing his

"Paulus" in Düsseldorf, and, as destiny decreed it, in order to fall in love with the beautiful Cécile Jean Renaud in Frankfort.

I owed it to Zelter's recommendation that Ludwig Berger, the most patronized teacher of the piano in Berlin, who, considering his feeble health, was overwhelmed with lessons already, nevertheless took me on as pupil likewise.

Berger, a native of Berlin, was then nearly fifty, when I made his acquaintance—an amiable, noble man, but an unhappy hypochondriac. In order to be able to marry his sweet early love, the charming songstress Wilhelmine Karges, from Frankfort on the Oder, he had gone to St. Petersburg with his revered master Clementi, in 1805, to make for himself a position as teacher of the pianoforte on the gold-rich Neva. There he entered into a friendship with John Field, whom he placed as piano-player even higher than Hummel and Moscheles, and from whom he learned. Thanks to the recommendations of Clementi and Field, and owing to his own rare teaching talent, Berger had soon won such a large circle of pupils in St. Petersburg that he was enabled to invite his *fiancée* to follow him. He went as far as Kurland to meet her; and there, in a wretched village, he celebrated the happiest day of his life, his union with Wilhelmine. But ten months later he stood, a broken man for ever, at the grave of his happiness—of his wife and child. His soft heart had never quite recovered from this dreadful blow. Also his health was for ever undermined. After an absence of twelve years he returned to Berlin.

Here he composed his most glorious songs, many

of which are sung even to this day, without those who sing them knowing any particulars about the composer; among others his "Müllerlieder"—which were only put in the shade by Schubert's compositions on the same songs by Wilhelm Müller—his "In einem kühlen Grunde," "Als der Landwirth von Passeier," "De letzen Zehn vom vierten Regiment," &c. His favourite song was the feeling—

Von blauen Veilchen war der Kranz, &c., &c.,

which he had composed for his beloved bride.

In Berlin Berger, together with the talented Bernhard Klein—the composer of the opera "Dido," who died so young—and, with Rellstab, became the founder of the "Berliner Liedertafel" (Berlin musical or choral society), and for it Berger composed his most beautiful quartettes for men's voices.

But his life's warming and strengthening sun had set for him too early, otherwise Berger would certainly have become one of the greatest song composers of our time. A deep melancholy threw a shadow over his days, and broke his courage and pleasure in producing. He died in February, 1839, of nervous apoplexy whilst standing beside a pupil at the piano, marking the time. His death was more kindly than his life had been. Friends and grateful pupils put on his monument the becoming epitaph:—

"Great as artist; noble, true, generous as man!"

Next to the house of the Mendelssohns, it was the villa of the Beers in the Thiergarten which collected all the musical celebrities of Berlin, and the most celebrated concert and opera performers, within its walls. There played Hummel, Moscheles, Kalkbrenner, Spohr, Paganini; there sang Henriette

Sontag, Angelica Catalani, Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, Nannette Schechner, Sabine Heinefetter: there were heard the first compositions of the son of the house, Giacomo Meyerbeer, who was called originally Jacob Beer, but who already in his boyhood had had to prefix to his own the name of a rich Herr Meyer, whose heir he was, and had Italianized his name Jacob to Giacomo during his long stay in Italy.

Like a queen, Madame Beer was enthroned and ruled in this rich house; she was jocularly called, "Die Königin Mutter" (The Queen-mother), and she did indeed practise a royal hospitality and munificence.

The most interesting person in this house for me was young Michael Beer, the noble and amiable author of "Paria"—a tragedy in one act, which, under the emblem of an Indian paria, protested against the even then very popular, "Hep, Hep!" and for a worthy place for Judaism—and of "Struensee," for which Meyerbeer, the brother of the author, afterwards wrote the music. I played with success in the tragedy in Dresden, when the young poet was long gone. Michael Beer was as true a devotee of poesy as any poet ever was. The family of Meyerbeer I met again in Paris, in 1829, and afterwards during the coronation festivities of Emperor Ferdinand in Prague.

Of the virtuosi who passed through Berlin I liked Ignaz Moscheles best. He came to Berlin in November, 1824, and, when still only thirty, had won for himself the title of "le prince des pianistes." He gave three brilliant concerts in Berlin, and played in several others given for charitable purposes. About

his wonderful playing old Zelter wrote to his friend Goethe at the time,—

"Moscheles does indeed play so that one has to take a Lethean draught and forget all his predecessors. The fellow has hands, I must tell you, which he turns like a shirt, for he does not play badly even with his nails."

During a concert for the benefit of the sufferers from inundation on the Rhine, I, for the first time, came into personal contact with Moscheles. Count Röder of Karlsruhe, one of the acting committee, invited my co-operation in favour of my countrymen. I proposed to recite something, but was prevailed upon to show myself to the Berliners at the piano, as a novel decoy. I was in fashion at the time, owing to my sudden retirement from the Königstadt theatre, which had caused much sensation. And my prudent mother decided that I should not go out of fashion again, until my first appearance on the royal stage. Thus I was obliged to play in public Czerny's "Rondo Turc à quatre mains," together with my most enthusiastic musical admirer, Greulich, a first-rate pianist, who came to our house almost daily in order to play with me "à quatre mains" for his amusement, in the same concert in which also Moscheles played.

"Le prince des pianistes" was goodnatured enough to compliment me on my *playing;* but the critic was malicious enough to report that Mdlle. Bauer in her charming toilette, white tulle with natural geranium blossoms, *looked* divine.

Soon afterwards Moscheles paid us a visit. Both of us were to take part in a concert which Karl Blum gave in Potsdam. This time I remained true to my-

self, and gave a recitation. But in our house good Moscheles sacrificed himself, probably to please a proud mother's heart, and played with me the overture to "Don Juan" "à quatre mains," giving me in his delicate way the most valuable hints.

When Moscheles, on the morning of the 15th of December, called for us in the coach in order to drive to Potsdam, Felix Mendelssohn came running with burning cheeks once more to take the tenderest leave of his revered master, who, during these few weeks, had become his beloved teacher and friend for life. The eyes of both were moist.

I was profoundly moved half a century later, when both friends had long been dead, to read in Moscheles' diary what in those days of the first meeting with the boy Felix he wrote about him and the house of the Mendelssohns :—

"That is a family such as I have never yet known; the boy Felix, now fifteen years old, is a phenomenon to which there exists no second. What are all the prodigies compared with him? They are just precocities, and no more; but this Felix Mendelssohn is a mature artist, and still only fifteen years old. We remained at once for several hours together. I had to play much, where in fact I had come to hear, and to see compositions, for Felix had to show me a concerto in C minor, a double concerto and several motets, and all teeming with genius, and more than that, so correct and thorough. His elder sister, Fanny, also exceedingly talented, played fuges and passacailles by Bach, without music, with most admirable exactness; I think she may justly be called a good musician.

"Both parents leave upon one the impression of people of the highest culture. They are concerned about Felix's future, doubting whether he is possessed of sufficient natural talents to really distinguish himself and become great in his profession; whether he might not, like so many talented children, suddenly go down again. I could not sufficiently assure them how, being convinced of his future greatness, I had not the slightest doubt of his genius; but I had to repeat this often, ere they believed it. These, then, are no ordinary prodigy-parents, such as those we come across so frequently."

Also, during the drive to Potsdam, Moscheles never ceased to express his admiration for Felix Mendelssohn, till all of a sudden the most violent headache attacked him, and he sank, pale as death, his eyes closed, back upon the cushions. He nevertheless insisted on performing. And after my mother had rouged him, in order that his ghastly appearance might not attract attention, and after he had reached the piano with tottering steps, he played, in the presence of the king and court, like a god.

Madame Grünbaum, from Vienna, a daughter of Wenzel Müller, who charmed the Berlin people, especially through her purling bird-quavers in the character of "Rosine" in the "Barbier von Sevilla," justly called by her admirers "the German Catalani," sang and was greatly applauded, and I recited the "Erlebnisse eines Troubadours," Blum accompanying me with the guitar.

In Potsdam we took leave of Moscheles. He set out for new triumphs in the wide world. Only years afterwards, when Moscheles had removed from London

to Leipzig, to please his friend Mendelssohn, did we meet once more in Dresden, to our mutual pleasure.

Soon after this concert-tour to Potsdam the amiable old President Scheve requested me to declaim in a concert for the benefit of the "Luisenstift" (Luisa Institute). I recited "Nichts," by Theodor Hell.

As an acknowledgment of my services I was invited, together with my mother, to a dinner of the "Thousand Years Club," by the President. This club consisted of fourteen members only, whose ages added together exceeded the figure 1000. The members were mostly military men of rank, their breasts decked with the orders of the War of Independence. The old gentlemen in the most charming gallantry did the honours to us according to the style of last century. After the cloth was removed I read Hebel's "Sommerabend" and "Hans und Verene" in the Alemannian dialect, and my neighbour, General Lestocq, again and again begged, "Oh, just once more the hearty conclusion!" And I had patiently to repeat, "Jo frili willi jo!" till the whole dinner-party could achieve it correctly. When I afterwards met one of the "thousand years" I heard at once, "Jo frili willi jo!"

On two more occasions I appeared as pianist before a Berlin audience. In a concert given by the celebrated violoncellist Bernhard Romberg I played with the harper Desargus a concerto by Field, and a duo, variations on the song, "Blühe, liebes Veilchen." On the same night Henriette Sontag sang, putting the whole of us into the shade. According to a previous understanding we had chosen the same toilette, simple flowing *linon*, embroidered

with golden ears of corn; similar wreaths in the hair. It was Henriette's last appearance in a concert, prior to her departure for Paris, towards the end of 1827, a year called by Rellstab "the jubilee-year of song."

Shortly before my departure I played a sonata "à quatre mains" by Hummel; my partner was Hancke; and in one of Hummel's concerts, whose free fantasias on "Lott' ist todt" carried away the Berliners to the gayest raptures, Nina Sontag and I slightly made fools of ourselves by somewhat childish recitations. It really is not easy to find a suitable poem for public recitation.

My mother wanted me not to refuse any invitation to take an active part in concerts, as a kind of compensation for the often really too insignificant parts in which I had to appear before the Berlin public in the theatre.

Just one more concert I should like to mention, in which the prodigy Karl Eckert, at the age of five, for the first time faced a Berlin audience, in June, 1825, and played the piano like a virtuoso. His astonishingly fine ear for music, which would immediately notice the slightest discord in the largest orchestra, was especially extolled, and enthusiasts even prophesied that this musical genius would soon have obscured Felix Mendelssohn. Karl Eckert was the son of a sergeant in Potsdam, and foster-son of Friedrich Förster, who took the boy with him to Weimar, and made him play before Goethe, just as Zelter had done previously with Felix Mendelssohn. Eckert, who was then seven years old, was allowed to play to Goethe his composition of the "Erlkönig," and to play fantasias together with Hummel, and, at the same time, on a grand piano, whereupon Goethe remarked —

"Original talent. That is water to my mill."

Karl Eckert afterwards accompanied Henriette Sontag-Rossi upon her great concert-tour through America as her accompanist, and made a name for himself as conductor of operas in Vienna, Stuttgart, and Berlin.

But who remembers the amiable and long departed poet and composer Tiehsen?—and his sweet little song —

Ach, wem ein rechtes Gedenken blüht,
Dem blüht die ganze Welt,
Und wessen Herz in Liebe glüht,
Um den ist's wohl bestellt.
Das Vögelein, das ja nur flattern kann,
Und singen und sonst nichts mehr,
Hätt' es nicht Lieb', wo nähm' es dann
Die sussen Weisen her!

All departed, died away in the distance! Only my remembrance of that gone-by time of so much gaiety and music in Berlin continues to bloom in loneliness. How long? I ask.

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After having thus minutely written about the old authors, poets, and musicians of old Berlin, half a century ago, I may be permitted to mention in all brevity some other artists yet.

Like a king among them appeared the ideally majestic figure of Christian Rauch when he walked "Unter den Linden," or entered a saloon with his wonderful daughter Agnes. His magnificent marble image of Queen Luise in the mausoleum at Charlottenburg was visited every summer by half the population of Berlin; the people went to it as if they were on a pilgrimage to some sacred shrine. His hero-statues of the War of Independence had already been unveiled, as that of Blücher was during my stay.

Privy Chamberlain Timm told me a nice, amiable anecdote about the great artist. One day when Rauch was driving, in company with Prince Wittgenstein, to Charlottenburg, to visit the king, he sat in a brown study at the side of the prince, till the latter asked him —

"What are you thinking of, dear Rauch?"

"I think of the day, sir, when I, thirty years ago, drove to Charlottenburg together with you too, when our Queen Luise was still alive. Then your Highness was seated in the carriage, and I *stood on the board behind.*"

Yes, this greatest of sculptors of his time had once been a footman of Queen Luise, and was not ashamed of it.

During my sojourn in Berlin beautiful Agnes Rauch, whom her father had legitimised, espoused the talented but queer painter Mila. What a noise was stirred up when the rumour went abroad that Mila had deserted his young wife during their marriage-trip, because he had fancied that the latter had had more tender relations with her father than is allowed upon our non-olympian earth! But I believe to this day that dismal Mila, who had long been running about Berlin like a ghost-seer, had taken a trembling moon-beam for a spectre.

Agnes Rauch afterwards married Professor d'Alton. Paul Mila only died a few years ago, the most melancholy hypochondriac. His great talent was wrecked on an unhappy fixed idea.

Of the celebrated artists of those Berlin days I was painted, as well as by the Roman Gentili, by court painter Franz Krüger and Karl Begas.

Krüger gained a reputation as painter especially by his canvases, often of enormous dimensions, of horses, hunts, and reviews, with hundreds of characteristic portraits in them, ordered by the courts of Berlin and St. Petersburg. King Friedrich Wilhelm III. and Emperor Nicholas used to designate for these portraits not only the most famous, but also the most popular, characters of their capitals. The court painter, who was still young then, was also in society regarded as one of the most popular artists in Berlin.

One evening, towards the end of 1825, we were at a party at the house of the solo-dancer, Madame Desargus-Lemière, and were very merry. Our hostess produced her magnificent album, and requested Krüger to sketch something in it in remembrance of this evening. Then he suddenly exclaimed —

"Please, Fräulein Bauer, just sit still in that posture for three minutes;" and a few minutes later, my portrait, of striking resemblance, drawn with a few pencil-strokes, was in the album. I wore a simple dress of white *linon*, very open in front, and a head-dress, then in fashion and very becoming, in which thick locks were lying rolled up over the brow, and stood up like a cock's tail at the back of the head, over a comb specially adapted to the purpose.

This pencil-sketch met with universal admiration; but I had very soon entirely forgotten it. Only five and forty years later, when my "Bühnenleben" was to be published by the Royal Privy Chief Court Printing Office at Berlin, and was to exhibit at the same time my early portrait, my esteemed publisher and early friend, R. v. Decker, brought to light this

little drawing which Krüger had been asked to repeat for my friend Gustav Decker. After the latter's death, the picture had been transferred to the study of Rudolf Decker, and had hung there all these years beside other reminiscences of his youth. Now it has been added in the form of a photograph to the first volume of my "Bühnenleben." Unfortunately the well-meaning photographer, intending to revive the faded pencil-lines, has, in the second edition, changed the blondine into a brunette.

Two years later Franz Krüger painted a pastille portrait of me. He had just married my charming colleague Johanna Eunicke; and the celebrated "Undine" in E. T. A. Hoffmann's opera of the same name, the charming "Zerline," "Susanne" and "Fanchon," the irresistible page "Cherubin," had turned into a very steady, careful little house-wife, who was by no means free from jealousy. Whilst Krüger painted me, Johanna sat there from the first to the last minute, knitting at an immense grey worsted stocking.

Since my mother desired likewise to possess a large oil-painting of me, I requested the famous painter Begas to do my portrait. He was ready to comply. But love played a peculiar trick on the otherwise excellent painter. He was—to tell the truth—so deeply in love, not indeed with me, but with his beautiful young wife, who likewise was constantly present in the studio during ladies' sittings, that my portrait when finished resembled more his wife than me. I refused to present Frau Begas to my mother as her daughter. After much bother Begas kept the

picture as a study for his pupils. I wonder if it serves that purpose still, or in what lumber-room it may have perished?

There lived an enthusiast of art at that time in Berlin, whom I often met in artistic and social circles, when we often sang and danced gaily together. Franz Kugler was a college friend of Felix Mendelssohn. He painted, and made verses, and at that time had already composed the very popular—perhaps indeed the most popular of his poems, "An der Saale hellem Strande." Franz Kugler afterwards married a daughter of Hitzig, and a daughter of his married Paul Heyse; he died young as Professor of the History of Art in Berlin.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROSY GOD.

KAROLINE'S LOVERS—ADOLF HERZFELD—KARL POSCH—BLUE EDUARD—LIEUTENANT COLONEL VON TRESKOW—COLONEL VON KÖNIG—POOR ZÄHNCHEN, THE COLONEL'S DOG—COUNT SAMOILOW—KAROLINE IS ENGAGED TO HIM—HE IS DISCOVERED TO BE A SWINDLER—HIS HISTORY.

IN the spring of 1826 I was touring in Hamburg at the theatre under the management of Jacob Herzfeld. His son Adolf, then twenty-six years old, a fiery, gifted artist and amiable man, played the lovers with me, and soon, very naturally, he loved me really outside his theatrical parts. This became especially clear to me when we played together in the "Bräutigam aus Mexico," he "Alonso," I "Suschen." In the fourth act there was a scene :—

Alonso. "If thou lovest me, Suschen, then say yes!"

Suschen (whispers bashfully). "Yes!"

Alonso. "Louder, Suschen, louder!"

Suschen. "Yes! yes!"

Alonso. "Louder still, Suschen—heart on heart, breast on breast!"

Then Suschen, in overflowing love, cries out a loud, exultant "Yes!" and passionately falls upon the neck of the beloved man. During the applause that followed, I felt how Alonso pressed me ever more warmly to his heart, and heard him whisper, "Must this happiness cease with the comedy? Would that it might last for life! Would that I might hope!" Confused, I disengaged myself from his arms. Also, father Herzfeld tried to attach me as his daughter-in-law to his house, and to his stage. Adolf Herzfeld came to Berlin in winter in order to follow up his suit. Would that I could have seen my way to a cheerful yes! How many bitter things I should have been spared! But my mother was opposed to this union. She aimed at a higher position in life for me. How heavily were both of us to pay for the ambition only a few months later!

Adolf Herzfeld was destined to celebrate his fifty years' jubilee as an esteemed actor of the Vienna "Burgtheater" in 1870. Soon afterwards he died. He was very happy in his marriage. And I?

In August, 1826, the youthful lover, Karl Posch, from the Court-theatre of Neu-Strelitz, came to Berlin on a short engagement—an excellent actor and amiable brother artist. We played together in three pieces in Berlin and Charlottenburg, and with most gratifying success. In "Welches ist der Bräutigam" Posch gave a clever reading of Langers—I played "Rosalde." In "Der Oberst" he made a very elegant lance-officer, V. Bontemps—I gave "Elise von Belmont;" in "Preciosa" he was the fiery and poetical "Alonso," I took the title part: and then we separated, never to meet again.

And now, in the summer of 1876, after half a century, an old blind man of seventy-nine years writes to me through a stranger's pen,—

"Fellow-artist of a beautiful, classical, bygone stage-world. Receive my most heartfelt thanks for your "Bühnenerinnerungen" which illuminated my perpetual darkness like sunbeams. Your dear image stands again before the eye of remembrance in the fulness of youthfulness, beauty, and gaiety, as at that time when you were my adored 'Preciosa.' Do you remember the poor 'Alonso' who stood beside you when you, mounted high on a horse, rode on to the stage, surrounded by the gipsy horde, and who whispered to you, 'But, Fräulein Bauer, you sit so high that I cannot reach your hand'? I hear your bright laughter, with which you answered roguishly, 'My hand is indeed not within reach!' to this very day. May the enclosed old theatre-bills of those beautiful Berlin days call back in you a kindly remembrance of your poor old colleague from Neu-Strelitz, who continues to live solely in the memory of a bright past. Permit me to acquaint you a little with this past.

"Up to the year 1822 I was engaged as youthful *jeune premier* at the Court-theatre in Dessau. How proud I felt when I was allowed to play there with the famous Esslair!

"When, in 1822, the Court-theatre in Neu-Strelitz was opened, I, too, accepted a flattering invitation to it. The real director, the soul of the stage, was Duke Karl of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, brother of the reigning Grand Duke Georg and of the late lamented Queen Luise of Prussia. What a deep interest Duke Karl

took in the dramatic art, and what a grand representative both of man and devil he was himself, you know better than I, you having been in Berlin at the time; but you will scarcely know that the Duke did not disdain here to appear in Neu-Strelitz in 1825 upon the public stage with us comedians, as 'Armer Poet,' and 'Lumpensammler von Paris,' by his characteristic play equally charming court and public.

"Although the Duke Karl might live in Berlin, he was practically the manager of our stage in Neu-Strelitz; which means a great deal, considering the want of railways in those days. He drew up the *répertoire* for each week, and fixed the cast. Nearly every month he came to Neu-Strelitz for some days, discussed everything with the able stage-manager and conscientious actor, Blumauer, the father of the celebrated Fried. Blumauer, and conducted the great rehearsals of such new pieces as had since been got up. The duke showed less interest for the opera—a blessing for us.

"Duke Karl and the reigning Grand Duke provided in the most generous way for the weal of their stage artistes. In summer the theatre was closed for four months. Still our pay continued—an advantage not enjoyed by the members of any other stage at that time. I was fond of utilizing my summer's leave for touring trips, in order to make the personal acquaintance of the most famous actors of those days. Thus it is among my proudest reminiscences that I was permitted to play chief parts in classical pieces, together with the unparalleled actress Sophie Schröder, four times; and in 1829, in Darmstadt, to appear beside Seidelmann; and in 1825, in Berlin, with you,

illustrious artiste, and with Ludwig Devrient and Beschort: hours never to be forgotten.

"But our small stage had among its members many other able artists, some of whom, I am sure, have become personally known to you. The excellent comic actor Meaubert came from the Court-theatre in Brunswick; he died as a member of the Dresden Court-stage. The low comedian Görner from Ballenstedt, who afterwards changed his line to that of intriguer, lived to celebrate his fifty years' jubilee as artist while acting as head manager in the Thalia theatre in Hamburg. This rare fortune fell also to the 'intriguer' Porth, who came to us from Stettin, and who was afterwards your colleague in Dresden. The honest 'hero-father' Solbrich, from the Schröder school in Hamburg, and the 'hero-actor' Thieme, from Kassel, have died here. Winger, the latter's successor, is still living in Dresden.

"In the year 1826 I followed a call as youthful 'lover' to the new Court-theatre in Gotha, which was reopened on the Duke Ernst entering Gotha, after an interval of two-and-twenty years. It was the self-same stage in the castle upon which old Eckhof and young Iffland had shone in bygone days. But only eighteen months later, I gladly followed another invitation that called me back to Neu-Strelitz for life.

"The death of Duke Karl was an irreparable loss for our stage. Its time of greatness was buried together with the gifted prince. After the death of the excellent intendant Von Normann, the new intendant Von Dachröden took the helm; he introduced pompous, costly operas. The drama was neglected. The best artistes left our stage. In the year of revo-

lution, 1848, many citizens demanded the closing of the Court-theatre. The Grand Duke agreed, and the theatre became private property. Art had to give way more and more to speculation.

"Thus the 'beautiful days of Aranjuez'[1] came to an end for me too. But the saddest were yet in store for me. Five years ago I became totally blind, and last autumn inexorable death carried off my dear good wife after a very happy matrimony of forty-six years. She was my only comforter, nurse, and reader in my misfortune. Without family and relations, I am left, all alone and forsaken in life, just nursed by a servant. My small pension from the duke does not permit of my paying a reader for the refreshment of my mind, and weeks pass by in which no intellectual word gladdens my ear. Thus I have been in the possession of the first part of your 'Bühnenleben' for two months, and have only been able to acquaint myself with fragments of half a volume. How gladly would I sacrifice whole nights, if by so doing I might have the privilege entirely to immerse myself in your reminiscences, which indeed call back to my mind too the most beautiful time of my life as artist and of my youth. And already my whole soul is panting for the promised second part of your 'Bühnenerinnerungen' ("Stage Reminiscences").

I wonder if those and these reminiscences will reach my poor old fellow-artist! And if my books had been of no other use than to illuminate some hours of the everlasting night of the lonely blind man, they would not have been written wholly in vain. And if these lines now and then remind a sunny pair of eyes to

[1] Allusion to a passage in Schiller's "Don Carlos."

devote this or that free hour to a poor blind man, neither will they have been lost.

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Of my most faithful and most loving admirer, the "Blue Eduard," I have already spoken in more detail in my "Komödiantenfahrten." But he must not be wholly left out here; for I think no other man ever loved me so ardently and purely as he did. Moreover, I should like here to supplement and correct myself on some points.

Soon after my appearance on the Königstadt theatre I found among the many poems of homage I received some which were distinguished by their tenderness and poetical sweetness; they were simply signed "Eduard."

But, quite against every use and wont of poets and admirers, this Eduard did not call at our house in order to cash the thanks for his verses.

I really was very curious to know this invisible and unassuming adorer. Only a tall, dark figure I saw sometimes at night follow me from the theatre to our house, and look up to our windows.

"That, I am sure, is Eduard, our poetical 'Knight Foggenburg,'" I said to my mother. "But why does he not come like other gentlemanly admirers, in bright day-light, and pay us a formal visit?"

One evening, when I had come home alone in a carriage from a party, and waited for the opening of the door, a man assaulted me and wanted to kiss me. But already another had sprung forward from the shadows of the opposite houses, and had hurled aside the assailant. A trembling voice requested me to be calm, saying that I had nothing to fear. When the

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entrance door was unlocked from within, my deliverer had vanished. It was my mysterious Eduard.

At last, when I had already made my *début* on the royal stage, a worthy dame introduced herself to me, at a party, as the mother of my most sincere adorer, Eduard. Her husband held the title of chancellor in the *bureau* of Prince Wittgenstein, the influential lord chamberlain, chief intendant of the royal stages, minister of state, and intimate friend of Friedrich Wilhelm III. This "chancellor" was an elegant old gentleman, who wore black silken stockings and buckle shoes; in the broad plaits of his ruffle he wore a glittering diamond. He appeared always carefully powdered — a genuine court official of the last century.

"But why have I never yet seen Eduard in your company?" I asked his mother, puzzled. "I should like so much to thank him for his tender, poetical effusions of homage, and for his discreet chivalrous services on that dark night. Please, honoured madame, tell him that; and that my mother and I would be very happy indeed to see him at our house to-morrow, after the rehearsal."

The lady said with tears,—

"You see this is the dreadful misfortune of my poor son, that he dare approach nobody, not even you, from the fear of inspiring horror instead of sympathy. My son was the handsomest, gayest lad, till some thoughtless boys at his school indulged in the cruel practical joke of crying out to him on the 1st of April, "Run home quickly, your house is fallen, and your mother buried under its ruins!" The tender, sensitive boy was attacked by epileptic convulsions, and that afflic-

tion follows him still. To make his misfortune worse, a thoughtless physician treated him with enormous quantities of nitrate of silver, in consequence of which his skin, face, lips, nay, the white in his eyes, have assumed a bluish hue, so that my unfortunate son looks in daylight like a walking corpse. That keeps him away from gay human beings. He hides his misfortune in the solitude of his room; only in the evening he ventures upon the street, or into a dark corner of a box at the theatre. There he saw you, and he has become your ardent admirer. It is his keenest wish to be allowed to come near you in the evening sometimes, and to accompany you home from the theatre. And you may look at him also in moonlight, for in it he appears undisfigured. Will you grant this favour to the unhappy youth?"

Deeply touched, I consented; and after my next appearance Eduard awaited us at the entrance of the theatre. He offered his arm to my mother with much gracefulness, and to me he handed a bouquet of lilies of the valley, and thanked us with sonorous voice for our kindness towards an unhappy being.

When we stepped into the moonshine, I looked up to our companion with some misgivings. His face was wonderfully beautiful, carved out in delicate and noble lines, his alabaster paleness still more pronounced by long dark locks and large brown eyes. A tinge of deep psychical suffering and soft melancholy was thrown over the whole of his idealistic appearance. He spoke simply, gently, poetically, intellectually—without any ordinary theatre adoration.

Thus we have walked together many an evening through the streets of Berlin. There, love was never

as much as mentioned, but I felt that Eduard loved me dearly. I liked him as a brother.

Only once did he visit us during the day, after I had for a long time in vain asked him to do so. I wanted to prove to him that he was valued by me too. I had hoped that in so doing I might restore him to the joys of society; but I had over-estimated my strength. I still see the melancholy quiver around his mouth, and the sad look of his eyes when he met me face to face in bright sunlight, and I at sight of him started back trembling and grew pale.

He smiled sadly, with resignation, "I knew it, of course; but you must not reproach yourself for it. You wanted to show me a kindness, only your nerves did not obey your kind heart. I am heartily grateful to it even for this minute. And now let me quickly step back—into my night. Farewell."

On the next theatrical evenings he was missing also at the entrance of the play-house. Only after I had requested him in writing to give me the certainty of his forgiveness by coming back again, he again became our nightly companion for years.

And then there came the hour of parting; it was in the spring of 1829. Eduard wanted to go to Paris, there to submit to a treatment by a French physician. That celebrated specialist had held out to him the hope, by letter, that he might entirely recover from his affliction. How hopeful of the future he was! And yet another hope shone through his words, "And when I stand before you once more, completely cured, undisfigured, in the laughing light of the sun, like other happy mortals, then, perhaps, then I may hope —perhaps!"

I had not the heart to destroy his dream. But when we parted, I kissed him heartily without horror.

When Eduard, weeks after, returned from Paris cured, I had left Berlin in mysterious privacy.

With what feelings may he have thought of Countess Montgomery in England? I had not the courage to write to him and ask his pardon.

We have never seen each other since. When I was touring in Berlin, five years afterwards, Eduard had long been gone. It was said that he had died from the effects of the too severe Paris treatment. Would that this was the sole cause, and that he had forgiven me!

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Could I conclude the chapter of my Berlin conquests without paying a tribute to the two truest and most original heroes of the old famous, long-extinct "theatre guard" of those days? That would be ungrateful.

There sat evening after evening in the play-house, in a certain corner box to the left of the second circle, an old, white-headed, exceedingly excitable gentleman in a blue dress-coat with yellow buttons, richly decked with orders—the retired Lieutenant-Colonel von Treskow, one of the most generally known inhabitants of Berlin. His pride was that he knew everybody in Berlin, and was known by everybody; but it must be said that he was in restless commotion from morning till night. "Unter den Linden," at the entrances to the play and opera-houses, and upon the Alexanderplatz in front of the Königstadt theatre, in the *cafés* of Fuchs and Stehely, and in the wine-saloons of Jagor, and Lutter, and Wegner—everywhere re-

lating, listening, and disappearing again like a will-o'-the-wisp, Lieutenant-Colonel von Treskow was the wandering *chronique scandaleuse* of Old Berlin. His favourite hobby-horse, however, was sweet theatrical talk, and if business was good, sweet theatrical scandal. Even Friedrich Wilhelm did not disdain to listen now and then to a piquant story of the stage, or an amusing town secret, told by the all-knowing colonel.

At one of the Brühl balls in the concert-room of the play-house, where the king likewise always appeared in a blue dress-coat with gold buttons, the king asked our colonel, "Dear Treskow, who is that gentleman——white hair—in spectacles?"

"Your Majesty, he must be a native of Potsdam; a Berliner he is not, else I should know him!"

"No, Treskow," the king said, laughing, "a Potsdamer he is not, else I should certainly know him. In Potsdam I am—Treskow! Since we are thus both certain that he is neither a Berliner nor a Potsdamer, I dare say he will be from Charlottenburg, or else he is a stranger."

"Your Majesty, in two minutes I shall report who he is!"

Also a characteristic anecdote from dear old provincial Berlin.

As well known as Lieutenant-Colonel von Treskow himself all over Berlin, were his trousers, which were of an indescribable mixture of the colours yellow, green, and grey.

When the king was once asked by the court marshal in what colour his palace was to be repainted during his absence, he gave the curt reply, "Like Treskow's trousers!"

During the *entr'acte*, the mercurial news-monger emerged now in the first circle, now in the pit, giving and receiving news. It was his greatest grief that access to the scenes and dressing-rooms was denied him; but the box-keepers were his affectionately beloved friends.

This perambulating *chronique scandaleuse* also approached me several times in the most intrusive manner, hoping to hear from me many a piquant little story about Prince August, Count Samoilow, and Prince Leopold, for repetition. Even the sharpest refusals, nay, downright rebukes, availed nothing; "Le garde meurt et ne se rend pas."

How different, on the other hand, appeared the other representative of the old bygone Berlin "theatre guard," which Saphir so incessantly derided and exposed to laughter!

Even during my earliest appearances in the royal play-house, an old gentleman, with long white hair, had attracted my attention, who, regularly enthroned upon a corner seat of the first private box to the right of the stalls, never took his eye off the stage, smiled happily, wept like a slight thunder-shower over moving passages, and on the slightest occasion applauded furiously, being busily engaged the whole of the evening touching his brow and mouth with a large fluttering white pocket-handkerchief. If we played in the opera-house in larger pieces, we could rely upon the large white handkerchief fluttering there, too, upon the corner place of the first private box to the right of the stalls. Only on ballet evenings did the white handkerchief become unfaithful to the play, having fluttered across to the beloved foot-artistes.

Although the old gentleman and his tear-kerchief—of the respectable size of a Berlin lady's breakfast-tablecloth—had long engaged my interest on account of their perseverance, yet I had never found an opportunity of making inquiries regarding them. But one sultry evening in May, while standing during an *entr'-acte* behind the curtain along with the talented "hero lover," Krüger, looking in turns with him through an *œil-de-bœuf* upon the steaming audience—and we were not sparing in critical remarks—I asked —

"I say, gossip, whose, in all the world, is the white pocket-handkerchief which flutters this evening like a gigantic, mad, white butterfly, over the first private box to the right of the stalls?"

Krüger's charming young wife had given my mother and me so hearty a welcome on our first visit in their happy home, that a familiar intercourse had sprung from it. I had soon stood sponsor to a daughter of the amiable couple, and since that time, we addressed one another gaily and with dignity—Herr Gevatter, and Frau Gevatterin.

"Frau Gevatterin," Krüger said, with feigned gesture of astonishment, "you have been for almost five months, making our boards and the hearts of our comedy *habitués* unsafe, and are not yet acquainted with the most enthusiastic of our Berlin theatrical enthusiasts—and the theatrical enthusiasts of Berlin are, to begin with, the superlative of all European theatrical enthusiasts—you know not the most steadfast of our faithful 'theatre guard'—who die so unwillingly, and surrender so readily—not the most original of all the originals of Berlin?"

"Of course not! Should I otherwise have asked you about him?"

"Eheu, eheu! The world goes out of joint, for its boards are splitting asunder. Colonel von König, if indeed not the favourite, at least the most ardent admirer, and the most champagne-foaming entertainer of the nine muses, has not yet laid at the feet of the most charming of these sisters, Thalia, his homage in all formality, not yet allowed the rich dew of his white moustache to drop upon the roses and lilies of her beautiful hand, and then caused his fluttering machine to wave over it like a beneficial, drying, soft breeze? Eheu! Eheu! I fail to understand any longer this world of boards."

"And I have not yet understood one syllable of my honoured gossip," I interrupted him, laughing.

"Child, gossip, hear thou at last, with becoming seriousness, the great tale of your worthy gossip. Colonel von König has long been on the retired list. Mars did not get on with the beloved muses. But the colonel is, besides, a rich bachelor, proprietor of two handsome houses in the Oranienburger Strasse, which are crammed full of the most costly fripperies of bygone centuries, and his friend Henn (Clauren), as late as yesterday, confided to me that Colonel von König has long ago cast a longing, burning eye upon your beautiful hand."

"My hand, my hand of seventeen and a half years to this certainly seventy-seven years old *intime* of friend Henn! Gossip, let me know where the Spree is deepest, and I will bless you."

"Near Stralau, madame," said Krüger drily. "But

previous to availing yourself of the deep Spree, you must first attend one of those charming nine-muses' dinners at the house of our colonel. Nor should you forget that you now have certain duties to fulfil in your venerable character of godmother to my child."

"You may well talk like that, gossip. But I should wish you were a young girl, fond of life; then I should take you at your word, and you would have to marry the old colonel—without pity."

"Marry? Madame, who speaks of marrying?"

"Well, who else but you? Have you not been wasting your lungs for the last five minutes in selling me to that old pocket-handkerchief-waving-machine, for 'Baumkuchen,' and other sponsorial duties towards my godchild?"

"Yes, yes! that is the way with you women, for you are all alike," Krüger said with the most theatrical mien of innocence. "Give the devil a finger, and he takes your whole hand—hold out to a woman a hand-kiss in all honour, and she sees in the kisser a marriage candidate. No, no, my beautiful gossip, the Colonel von König never for a moment dreams of making you his Königin, but he has been panting with an ardent longing for some time to kiss your beautiful hand, and then to wipe it again tidily. He has long been turning about in his head the great thought of paying his respects to you and your mother in all the splendour of old-fashioned etiquette, and to ask you to accept of two muses' parts at his small dinners, but he is so shy, the poor old boy."

I laughed at the funny ideas of my merry gossip, and at the shy old boy of seventy-seven years on the other side of the curtain. The fluttering pocket-

handkerchief seemed literally to be suffering from an attack of epilepsy just then.

"Thus my mother is likewise to figure as a muse at the dinner? Then I shall claim for her the part of Urania, for she really is my 'heavenly' little mother."

"All, all who take part in it—I, thou, he, she, we, you, they—are raised to muses. But never more than eight muses are invited, for our host, of course, also dines with the rest at the round table of the Camœnæ."

"Well, that must be a capital muses' household. But how and where will Camœna König be enrolled? For a muse of the pocket-handkerchief the old heathens, to be sure, did not know."

"As Euterpe, the gladdening, the giver of dinners, 'Baumkuchen,' and champagne! Only when 'Baumkuchen' and champagne are going, Euterpe falls a little into the character of her sister Klio, the announcer of history. She relates regularly, amid flowing tears, how, more than sixty years ago, the beloved little dog 'Zähnchen' died so terrible a death."

"Dog—Zähnchen—tears?" I interrupted him in a lively manner; "pray, gossip, tell me more of the poor little dog 'Zähnchen,' and its sad master."

"Aha! Lover of dogs, have I at last hit you in the heart where it is weakest—at your passion for dogs? But I shall take good care not to tell you this dog-tragedy here; you must be present at its narration at 'Baumkuchen' and champagne, floods of tears, ghostly ancestral paintings, and other theatrical effects. However, the stage-manager is ringing his bell to say that we are to leave our *œil de bœuf*. One other

quick glance at the white pocket-handkerchief; the slight attack of madness has assumed the form of paroxysm. Soon you will feel these wings, calmed down to a zephyr, fanning your hand. I shall inform our friend Henn that I have made a practicable breach already into your dog-fancying heart, and he will not be long in encouraging friend König to a visit—hand-kiss, handkerchief-waving, invitation to dinner; champagne, 'Baumkuchen,' Zähnchen and tears."

To be sure, after three days, Henn-Clauren, who was then in the very zenith of his Mime-fame, arrived at our house and introduced himself to my mother and me as forerunner of Colonel von König, announced the latter's state visit for the following noon, and bespoke for his good old friend friendly ears, hearts, and hands.

And the following day, at twelve o'clock precisely, a huge old-fashioned coach was rumbling through the Charlotten Strasse, and stopped in front of our house. A hoary old servant climbed with difficulty down off the box, and opened the carriage door, and out of the wide basket, lined with lemon-coloured silk, there came forth, first a large white fluttering handkerchief, and then our old theatrical friend. Softly, shyly, the servant pulled the bell. Then the girl conducted him into the room. He was, I am sure, as old as his master, had thin, white hair, and a thin, well-plaited pig-tail, which, during his many bows, whipped the high, stiff, red collar of his old-fashioned chocolate-coloured livery-coat like a rat's tail; he wore knee-breeches of black velvet, white silk stockings, and shining shoes with large steel buckles. Amidst continual bowing he stepped up to my mother, then

suddenly stopped, with a jerk as if a spring sent a ramrod through his spine, as straight as an arrow, and said in a soft, trembling voice —

"My noble, gracious master, Herr Colonel von König, desires the honour of being allowed to pay his respects to the ladies."

"He will be welcome," said my mother. Immediately another spring worked in the spine of the old man, with another jerk he made his deepest bow, once more raised himself ramrod-like, turned upon his left heel with soldier-like promptness, and like a guardsman of old Frederick II., marched up to the door.

As often as I afterwards played Albini's "Gefährliche Tante," and saw old servant Bolzmann announce, in exactly the same way to the actress Adele Müller, the exquisite country squire, Baron von Emmerling, I was forced to think of our Berlin theatrical enthusiast and his faithful servant.

The latter, meanwhile, had with a spring-jerk and deep bow, torn the door wide open, allowed his master to enter, and had left the scene again with a new bow.

Colonel von König also still wore his little pigtail, shoes with buckles, and high black silk stockings, dress-coat of fawn-colour with broad flaps in the fashion of the beginning of our century, and a huge, tidily-folded ruffle, out of which shone forth a costly diamond. He was a tall, comfortable-looking man, who saluted with the military grace of the school of old Frederick; then drawing a deep breath, he remained standing at the door, and with his well-known giant handkerchief he touched his brow, cheeks, nose,

and mouth. Between these operations his round, brown eyes looked over to us with childlike curiosity, and at the same time with childlike shyness. The old gentleman evidently did not know how to find the first word, owing to his embarrassment. My mother kindly went to his succour by inviting him to take a seat. A new struggle for breath and words, and a convulsive application of the handkerchief. Then there rang softly, although not without hindrances, forth from under the stiff, white moustaches:—

"Most honoured lady! most charming mademoiselle! How happy you make me by the honour of your acquaintance" (pause, struggle for breath, work with pocket-handkerchief). "May a poor, tiresome old bachelor take the liberty, or presume, to invite two such amiable ladies to enter his old-fashioned house at one o'clock the day after to-morrow, and to accept of a simple dinner in his company—genuine Berlin plain cookery—" (pause, breathing-cramp, fluttering of handkerchief).

My mother accepted the invitation in appropriate, kindly words.

"Most honoured madame! most lovely and charming mademoiselle! You make me exceedingly happy. You will meet very amiable people: Herr Krüger and wife, 'Hofrath' Henn, Theatre-director Piehl from Breslau."

"Oh," I interrupted him, "with the latter I have played already at the Königstadt theatre. He gave an excellent reading of the proud wooer in 'Fournier zu Kronstadt' and the villain in the 'Waise aus Genf.'"

"Yes, yes, the self-same!" cried the old gentle-

man, breathing already quite lightly. "Besides, you will meet my tenant, a very charming doctor, and my nephew."

"Thus nine in all," I said, laughing merrily. "There the muses are completed."

"Yes, with me, with me," the colonel retorted in bad grammar, but with great satisfaction. "Oh, you happy mother!" and he had successfully snatched up my mother's hand, and pressed his moustache three times upon it. But he did not let go her hand until he had carefully wiped and pressed it with his cloth. "Charming, beautiful child!" and my hand had to undergo the same kissing and wiping operations, "what an enjoyment it is for me to be allowed to kiss this little and most charming hand. Oh, how happy I am to once more open my desolate old house for two such magnificent new muses!"

"Well, colonel," I interrupted him saucily, "you must have got together by this time quite a respectable number of muses."

"With you, ladies, it is exactly forty-five, and nine is so prettily contained in forty-five; this facilitates to me and my old Johann very much the arrangement for the invitations. For there is just room for nine at our round dining-table, and it is besides good to distribute the most charming muses over five days at my table. For how should I, poor old man, otherwise be able to equally address my courtesies to so many beautiful ladies? One would be jealous of the other!" the old gentleman concluded, with a curious mixture of candour and conceit.

Of course, by this time, what little I possessed of gravity was exhausted. In order to cloak the

threatening outburst of laughter, I recited with pathos, quoting Schiller:—

> He alone has got the muses
> Who carries them in his warm bosom;
> To a Vandal they are stone!

"Charming, sweet girl, what an enviable, glorious memory you have!" cried the colonel, enraptured, after a new salvo of kisses upon my hand. "That I want entirely. For what pains I have taken to learn by heart pretty little quotations, in order to use them on suitable occasions, but in vain. Though one day I might know them ever so well, when I wanted to quote them the day after they were gone. And this want of memory was the greatest trouble even of my boyhood. What severity my parents employed to sharpen my memory, nay, what cruelty—poor Zähnchen. All in vain!" The great white handkerchief was now fully employed to dry the falling tears of its master.

"Was not Zähnchen your little dog, colonel?" I asked sympathetically.

"Yes, indeed, my most lovely little soul. But that is too sad a story; I will tell you it some other day in my house, when you have seen the picture of my parents. Otherwise you will not believe such cruelty."

Kissing hands, wiping of hands *ad infinitum*, then the strange rococo visit was over. Master, servant, and yellow satin coach trotted away with the greatest ceremoniousness.

But the whole bizarre scene emerged before my young eyes more vividly still, when the next day but one at noon the heavy, brown oak-door, shining with brass

mountings, of the old-fashioned house at the bottom of the Oranienburger Strasse was opened to me and my mother; this house Colonel König inhabited himself, together with his old personal attendant, his coachman, and the no less aged kitchen *personnel*, whilst the neighbouring house, which likewise belonged to him, was let to a tenant. The strong perfume of the celebrated Berlin fumigating powder (*Räucherpulver*) met us in waves upon the marble mosaic of the spacious vestibule. My mother said, "A good omen, Lina!" and inhaled the aromatic fragrance with pleasure. She was exceedingly fond of the *Räucherpulver*, and never was without it, although we might be ever so far away from Berlin, on my subsequent artistic tours. Even to St. Petersburg we carried with us whole pound-tins of the fragrant powder, and on the border we enjoyed the fun of seeing the Russian custom-house officers trying with their tongues this new kind of spice, but without succeeding in its classification.

The vestibule and the broad, brown staircase, laid with costly, but faded carpets, in themselves presented a museum of *virtù* in the way of old prints, busts, pagodas, vases, carved settees, and cabinets of former centuries. At the foot of the staircase we were received by the old servants, upon the highest step by the colonel himself, beaming with delight, with his fluttering white handkerchief, and the requisite hand-kisses. With much *grandezza* he offered his arm to my mother, without, however, letting go his hold of my hand, whilst he conducted us through a suite of six smaller saloons. We were the first guests to arrive; thus I had leisure to inspect all the rarities which two centuries had accumulated here. The old gentleman

was evidently much amused with my curiosity and astonishment, and explained with complacency all the articles from Germany's bygone days, from Italy, England, and France, from Egypt, India, and China. I was especially struck with the two saloons *à la Pompadour*, with their mythological painted ceilings, the framed crystal mirrors, and the pretty little sofas with gold legs, and chairs bolstered with yellow and red silk. Between them, *étagères* and glass cabinets full of costly old knick-knacks, little porcelain figures, Chinese and Meissen cups, old-fashioned coloured tumblers and glasses, a strange flute-clock, and enormous watches with short broad chains and heavy *breloques*.

Such a bizarre treasure-house I had never yet seen. In one of the corners stood a spinett, richly ornamented with gold scrolls. I tried to play a short air from the *Schweizerfamilie*, but the cords moaned, the sounds were those of weeping. Like a wail of ghosts it rang through the old rooms.

"Ah! would that I could have played like that, dear child!" cried our host; "but I had no talent, no memory. At this spinett I have sat many a sorrowful hour, under the cold, severe eyes of my mother, and been obliged to practise; and when I had to play something to our visitors, fear or nervousness prevented me from managing the smallest piece, just the same as with the quotations. You will understand that, when once you have looked into the eyes of my mother."

And I did understand it when afterwards I saw in the dining-room among the portraits of his ancestors, and under the high piled-up head-dress of a tall, bony figure with hard, masculine features and leathery

complexion, two ice-grey piercing eyes, which looked down upon me so cuttingly cold. I shivered, and only felt myself again when I looked into the mild, beautiful, loving eyes of my own dear little mother.

Poor Lina, what would have been your lot if that proud, cold woman, with the callous eyes and the derisive aristocratic pride around her narrow lips, on yonder wall, had been your mother! And I felt the deepest sympathy for my strange old neighbour.

But after the first glass of champagne he was swimming in a sea of delight at the good-humour of his muses. Gossip Krüger and "Hofrath" Henn were in their very best form, and by their sparkling wit and odd remarks gradually carried away the rest of us. Only the nephew of our happy host sat there pale and serious and without sympathy, as if he had come down to us out of one of the golden, quaint frames of the ancestral portrait-gallery. And if indeed he did smile, it always reminded me of the *rire à froid* of the French.

Director Piehl, too, appeared now and then a little embarrassed, when the old servant with a deep bow offered him a dish as I happened to look across the table to him. Krüger explained the matter to me.

"Surely you know that old Hans is Piehl's father?" he whispered to me.

"Impossible," I replied, startled. "A son cannot allow himself to be thus waited on by his own father."

"And yet that is the case. Nay, what is more wonderful still, just look at the enraptured face with which old Hans regards his celebrated son—and waits upon him. The colonel had the boy brought up and

educated at his expense, and Piehl has done him credit."

"But he does no credit to himself," I called out, in my indignation louder than was prudent.

Already the delicious "Baumkuchen" was being cut.

"Gossip, what has become of the promised story of Zähnchen?" I whispered to my neighbour.

"Patience, dear, patience! I promise you, young dog-lover, you shall have the story of poor Zähnchen, and a good sob before the last drop of champagne is drunk. I have only to put the old gentleman a little on the track," Krüger whispered back. Then he addressed in a loud voice our merry host: "Colonel, do you know the greatest passion of my little gossip? No, you will not guess it: dogs! yes, dogs!"

The eyes of the colonel at once grew moist, his white handkerchief trembled, and he sighed,—

"Happy child, who had such a mother, and who is permitted to love her little dog. Look at that gloomy lady on yonder wall. That was my mother. In her eyes you may read the story of my youth, the misfortune of my life. I was not even permitted to love my mother. Her heart had become petrified in etiquette, aristocratic pride and prejudices; mine was to be stifled in the same manner. I was not allowed to approach my rich, splendour-loving parents, nor to address them, nay, not even look at them. How, when I was a child, I envied the son of our farm-steward, that old man Hans yonder, with whom I was able to play, but only in secret, when his mother stroked his hair back on his head, drew him upon her knees, and kissed him. Me my mother never caressed,

never kissed, never called by a pet name. After dinner I was led by my tutor into the dining-hall where I had to perform my best bow, and recite such tutorial phrases as I had learned by heart, and kiss his lordship my father's, and her ladyship my mother's, hand in the most humble way. When I had done all this to their satisfaction, I was permitted to withdraw again as gracefully and formally, with a sweetmeat of some kind or other. Then I would steal away to join my dear playmate, Hans, and to play with my little dog, Zähnchen. I shared my dessert with them. Them I dared to love, they dared to love me in their turn, only my mother was not to know it. Thus I grew up like an intimidated bird, like a flower without sun. I was without confidence in myself, and thus also without vitality. My tutor made complaints to my parents about my poor progress in learning, and about my utter want of memory. My mother called this laziness and want of will. She wanted to cure me thoroughly in her own way by a sudden, terribly rousing grief. She had heard of my secret affection for old Hans yonder, and for poor Zähnchen. Then she sent for me to come into the garden, and there upon a lawn she caused my innocent Hans to be whipped by the servants till the blood ran. I knelt beseechingly before my mother, I cried, I lamented. She laughed. And when I wanted to throw myself upon Hans in order to free him from the hands of the servants, then my mother caused me to be bound to a tree, and then, four yards away from me, my poor dear little Zähnchen was strung up on a branch of the tree. I hear his whining to this day, see his death-quiver even yet. Then I broke down unconscious.

When I recovered my senses the treatment had had its effect. I hated my mother—I hated her even to the grave—I still hate her very memory in that picture. But my vital vigour, my vital courage, were broken still more. It is thus I have become the ridiculous old man you see."

We were all deeply moved. Krüger told me afterwards that the colonel had never yet told the story with so much emotion.

The colonel and old Hans cried like children, and I also shed tears of sincere sympathy. The white cloth would not be denied to dry my tears likewise. It reminded me of Yorick, who dries now his own and now the tears of poor Maria de Moulins with his kerchief.

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Many a time subsequently did I sit beneath the gloomy ancestral portraits and listen to the story of little dog Zähnchen, and often did I see the huge white handkerchief flutter through the theatre. But two years afterwards the mournful cry went through the ranks of the theatrical world of Berlin that the oldest of the old guards had passed away over-night—Colonel von König was dead.

Soon the stranger news followed that the old original had left behind him the strangest will, bequeathing to his nephew only one half of his fortune; but the other half, and his quaint house, to the beautiful ballet-dancer Hoguet, because, as it is expressly stated in the testament, she "*kissed* most charmingly."

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Among my most attentive admirers of those Berlin

days was a young Polish count, one year younger than myself.

He came frequently to our house; we sang French duets together, or he sang Polish songs, and taught me the genuine "mazurka." I liked well enough to flirt with him.

My mother and I regarded him as a rather nice enamoured boy who was kept somewhat short of pocket-money by his *chère mère*, and who himself showed an unusual talent for economy. He never tried to give expression to his admiration for me by a bouquet, nor by any other delicate token of affection which cost money.

Monsieur le comte was proud of not understanding a single word of German. He hated Germany; still more, however, did he hate Russia, as was perhaps natural in a son of conquered Poland. He spoke only French, and had the strange trick, at every third word, of introducing a "Moi, mademoiselle, moi," in a quite inimitable tone.

How often did mother and I laugh at this grand "*Moi!*" We used, between ourselves, to call this youthful, self-complacent adorer always our "*Moi*" or "*Moichen!*"

If anybody had then told me: "Twenty years after this you will indeed learn to understand this dear '*Moi*'—this perpetual I, and only I—and will not laugh any more at this childlike '*Moi!*' This '*Moi*' will yet cause you to shed many hot tears. This violent, icy-cold, selfish '*Moi*' will be your lord and domestic tyrant—and you will be his impotent slave." I should never have believed it.

In the spring of 1827 there was introduced to me,

at a dancing-party at General Count von der Goltz's, by the still very youthful son of the house, who was an enthusiastic admirer of mine, an elegant, fine-looking Count Samoilow, from St. Petersburg. We danced together, we chatted, we laughed. The engaging stranger invited me several times to dance with him, and paid his court in rather a conspicuous manner. People soon began to tease me about this ardent admirer, and I confess I was rather pleased thereby.

Young Count v. d. Goltz, who was quite infatuated about the young Russian, related to me that his friend Count Alexander Samoilow had been politically compromised a little on the occasion of the throne-revolt in St. Petersburg after the death of Emperor Alexander, and had therefore fled from St. Petersburg, but that his family were held in very great esteem by Emperor Nicholas and were very rich, and that he would soon receive a free pardon, with permission to return to Russia, as soon as a little grass had grown over those youthful indiscretions; finally, that he was the best fellow in the world, the most amiable comrade and companion, &c., &c.

Next day young Count v. d. Goltz brought his friend Count Samoilow to call, and after that the latter would come more and more frequently to our house, giving me the most undoubted tokens of having fallen deeply in love with me. We also met frequently at parties in the best society. Everybody was charmed with the handsome, rich, distinguished Russian. My friends congratulated me on this fortunate conquest. My admirers, especially our Polish "*Moi*," were jealous of Count Samoilow. My enemies envied me my aristocratic suitor with the illustrious name.

And I? I harboured the kindliest interest for this handsome admirer, who cut such a fine figure in Berlin, kept a beautiful equipage and servants, and could speak so prettily of his great estates in Russia. I did not exactly *love* the count, but I certainly did not repel his suit. I looked forward, or I thought in my heart that it would be very pleasant to be a *Madame la comtesse de Samoilow*, and as such be relieved of all mundane cares, knowing that my present means were often inadequate to meet expenses. Also my ordinarily so prudent mother considered this match the best way of providing for me.

After a time Count Samoilow proposed formally for my hand. He showed us a letter from "Justizrath" Bauer (strange enough!) from St. Petersburg, which gave an account of his great fortune. He would settle on me an annual pin-money of 6000 thalers, and, if I cared, I might continue my connection with the theatre.

When my mother replied that a public betrothal could be thought of only when his parents also had given their consent, the count some time afterwards brought us a letter ostensibly from his father, which did not merely in the warmest and most affectionate terms pronounce his blessing on the proposed union, but announced his own approaching arrival in Berlin, and held out the speedy unconditional pardon of Count Alexander by Czar Nicholas.

Meanwhile my mother likewise had cautiously made inquiries about her future son-in-law, and heard nothing but what was favourable. Thus at a party she had asked "Geheimrath" Dr. von Gräfe whether he knew Count Samoilow, and he had hurriedly an-

swered her, "Yes, certainly, a very good and wealthy Petersburg family." Then the conversation was unfortunately interrupted by other guests.

Moreover, we heard that Count Samoilow frequented the Russian Embassy, and during a promenade "Unter den Linden," we ourselves saw how my *fiancé* saluted the Russian Ambassador Alopeus in quite a cordial manner, and how the latter returned the salute in a friendly way.

Thus I became the publicly betrothed and much-envied *fiancée* of Count Alexander Samoilow. He made me a present of a few pretty, but by no means expensive trinkets.

But the golden fortune was not to be of long duration, and was to come to a terrible end.

One day young Count v. d. Goltz, in the greatest excitement, rushed into our room, and without any preparation brought us the terrible news,—

"Count Samoilow is a swindler! He is just on his way to prison. He is not a count, and his name is not Alexander Samoilow. He has swindled the Russian Embassy of great sums, cheated a rich Petersburg tobacco-merchant of this town out of a thousand thalers, falsified innumerable papers,—what a misfortune for you!"

Yes, indeed! what a misfortune for poor mother and me! We stood there thunderstruck, stunned, unable to utter a word, to form a thought.

Was it really possible? Then we sank into one another's arms, and gave vent to our despair in bitter tears.

Soon our most tried friends arrived: "Justizrath" Ludolff, "Hofrath" Henn, Private Chamberlain

Timm, and others, to show us their sympathy, or to condole with us, and to assist us in every way. Timm came at the same time with a message from the king to comfort me and to offer me leave of absence, in case it should be painful to me to appear in public for some time.

But my friends advised me not to hide from the storm, but gallantly to face it, so as not to enable my enemies and enviers to have the pleasure of seeing me crushed by the misfortune. And I had the strength to appear the very next evening in the character of "Fridolin" in Holbein's "Gang nach dem Essenkammer." Our friends had prepared a kind reception for me, and my play was so natural that nobody could have thought that anything was amiss. This, of course, I was able to do only because my heart had never really been touched at all in the whole affair.

During the *entr'acte* the king came behind the scenes and said to me in quite a fatherly manner, "Poor child! Don't vex yourself—vexing business—very vexing! *Mauvais sujet!* Forget him,—soon have better chance!"

Berlin showed me its sympathy by quite an excessive number of invitations. Every one wanted to cheer me up and show me that I had lost nothing in his eyes by this experience. For my consolation I was told that Frau "Hofrath" Henriette Herz, the famous beauty, and one of the most celebrated ladies in Berlin, had, in her youth, had a similar adventure. A Portuguese Jew wooed her, allured her with his immense treasure, Moors, and parrots that were just on the road, and disappeared with the silver snuff-box of her father.

But nevertheless my enemies triumphed: Mdme. Stich and her most intimate followers, and above all others, Prince Augustus. I received infamous anonymous letters, in which the wonder was expressed again and again that the virtuous theatrical princess, who had scorned a Prussian prince, should have thrown herself in the arms of a Russian valet.

During his trial in the "Hausvoigtei," the unhappy Samoilow behaved very well towards us. Not a single word was uttered by him that might have compromised me. He asked my pardon, at the same time assuring me that only his passionate love had induced him to deceive me!

Even now I do not believe that the unhappy man had any mercenary views. He must have known that we were poor. Moreover, it would have been an easy matter for him to befool the richest girls in Berlin with equal facility.

My mother and I had of course to suffer much humiliation and inconvenience in the affair. We were examined as witnesses on oath, and were required to give up all the trifling presents we had received. But I was spared the pain of being placed face to face with the unhappy man. He was soon lodged in the Spandau house of correction, and I have never seen him since. My sufferings came from mortification, not wounded affection.

As soon as I had recognized in him an impostor, my regard for him vanished at once. I "cast him to the dead," and continued to play on the stage with zeal and pleasure. I had soon recovered all my old serenity and even managed to play, the winter following, in Wolff's new farce, "Der Kammerdiener," in

order to show that I was able myself to laugh at the very similar farce of my own life.

The piece was played first in the "palace" before the king and the court, as were almost all merry novelties. The handsome Duke di Lucca was present. The "Kammerdiener" was a great success. Amalie Wolff played the rich Jewish widow, "Mdme. Hersch," with refreshing humour and the purest Jewish accent. I hear her still sing in her love transports:—

> Dich in meinen Arm zu schliessen,
> Himmel, welch' ein Augenblick!

Weiss gave "Commerzienrath Hersch," her brother-in-law, splendidly. Handsome Heinrich Blum played the swindling valet—"Baron Schniffelinsky," who turns the heads of all the women and gets them to part with their money—unsurpassably. I played the chambermaid, "Albertine," gaily and pertly, as if the whole "Kammerdiener" (valet) affair did not concern me at all. At the conclusion, stepping forward to the middle of the stage I had to say, "A valet! Indeed! Would I had known that!" Then Prince August laughed a loud and derisive laugh. But the king called out "Brava!" and clapped his hands with ostentation.

In the play-house the "Kammerdiener" was given for the first time on the 5th of March, 1828. Curiosity, sympathy, and malicious joy had filled the house. My friends were prepared for a little theatre-row; but the play went off quite peaceably. Only some rich Jews were furious at this "Madame Hersch," and did not invite Wolff and his wife any more to their parties. Many of my friends found fault with "Tartuffe" Wolff for having written the

"Kammerdiener," and with me for having taken a part in it. At that time I passed it over with the easy-mindedness of youth; to-day I scarcely myself can understand my want of tact. All this was possible only because "Count Samoilow" had become perfectly indifferent to me.

I played in Berlin four times in public in the "Kammerdiener." Then, in the spring of 1828, I set out on my tour to St. Petersburg.

During my starring in Riga, which proved such a success, I was again reminded of Count Samoilow. Two years before, he too had made his *début* there as political refugee, commenced a love-intrigue with a beautiful girl of rank, got betrothed to her, and then, after the discovery of his swindling, had been forced to flee. The unhappy girl died of grief.

Soon after there called at our house a pale, very genteel-looking lady, dressed in deep mourning. When she saw me, she burst into tears and asked my pardon for her unhappy son who had sinned so grievously against me. Alexander was her only son; his father, "Kapellmeister" (band-master) Grimm, had been brought to the grave, she said, by his son's misconduct. I tried my best to comfort the unhappy mother.

Then, when I did not hear again for a long time, the name of "Samoilow," I thought the whole mad story forgotten by others, as I had almost forgotten it myself. But the name of "Samoilow" went like a black thread through my life. Thus when I—affectionately hastening to meet Prince Leopold of Koburg—had scarcely put my foot on English soil, the first evil word which met me as a salute was, "Samoilow!"

The prince had received anonymous letters from Berlin in which, probably by accomplices of Prince August, the whole affair had been represented to him in a manner most compromising to me. It was therein stated that I had not only been the betrothed, but the mistress, of the Russian valet.

It was some years afterwards, when I was fulfilling a temporary engagement in Berlin, that I received another sign of life from Samoilow Grimm. He wrote to me from the house of correction in Spandau, asking my pardon in the most touching way; but I did not answer his letter. And the last I heard of the poor wretch was that he had died in the prison of Munich. But how often has his name still rung in my ears, threatening, accusing! And yet I believe that I was only unfortunate in this affair, and not culpable.

* * * * * *

As a proof that I have related the unvarnished truth, I will quote here an extract from the record of the Samoilow affair by Karl Rogan, clerk to the criminal court. In his history of the Berlin "Hausvoigtei" he speaks of Count Samailoff (as he spells the name) as follows :—

"Among all the adventurers who have ever appeared on the scene in Berlin, Alexander Samailoff occupies decidedly the most conspicuous place. No one, either before or after him, has succeeded so completely, in the guise of a man of rank, in introducing himself into the highest circles, in rapidly winning for himself the favour of old and young, of men and women, by his vivacity and wit, and in so deceiving even the most cautious as to lead, for a

long time, a most brilliant life entirely at the expense of other people.

"But, indeed, both physically and mentally, he was possessed of the means requisite for such a performance in the world. In the prime of life, vigorous, of athletic form, with the head of an Apollo, he presented an imposing appearance.

"With these physical and mental qualities, which did not in any respect lack the grand *tournure* of the most aristocratic men, Samailoff united the noblest gait, each of his movements breathed that ease and elegance which are the true marks of a gentleman, a proof of a maturity acquired in the saloons of the fashionable world. As regards the *noblesse* of his *tournure*, one would not have taken him for a born Russian, but rather for a French aristocrat.

"It was in the spring of 1827 that Samailoff first came to Berlin, and his luxurious life, his aristocratic manners, and the winning address with which he understood how to interest everybody, drew upon him universal attention. Samailoff understood in a high degree the art of easily forming acquaintances and he was all the more successful in this as people met him half-way.

"Invitations were showered upon the handsome and gallant Russian from all sides, and soon he was a welcome guest in the *haute-volée* of the Residence.

"Samailoff had introduced himself as a Russian count. He described his father as a high state official in St. Petersburg, and gave himself out as an *attaché* to an embassy at a German court. No-

body even ventured to doubt his statements, for everything spoke in his favour; his appearance, his brilliant qualities, his apparent wealth, his costly equipage and staff of servants.

"Of all his acquaintances, he especially cultivated that of the talented artiste Karoline Bauer, the crown of the disciples of Thalia, whose acquaintance he had made at the Berlin court stage. Her talent had enraptured him; no wonder, for her performances were indeed of the first order, and the charming Karoline with the fiery spirit was the favourite of the whole public.

"Samailoff sought an introduction to the all-enchanting artiste, and found it. In closer intercourse she made a still greater impression upon him; and, carried away by her charming amiability, he confessed to her that he loved and adored her, and could not live any more without her.

"Then Karoline, who on the stage only *played* lovers, felt for Samailoff love in reality, and replied to his declaration with a confession of her feelings for him. Samailoff was the happiest of mortals.

"Karoline's mother, in order not to damage the reputation of her daughter, insisted on a public betrothal. Samailoff readily accepted the proposal. He concluded a contract of betrothal with the beautiful actress, in which he promised to pay a considerable sum as indemnity to his *fiancée*, in case he could not keep his word and obtain his father's consent.

"Everybody envied beautiful Karoline Bauer the rich young count; and in the higher circles, where a different matrimonial union of Count Samailoff had

probably been looked forward to, there were haughty sneers at this *mésalliance*.

"This ante-nuptial state had lasted only for a few days, when Count Samailoff was missed at the house of the beautiful Karoline. The bride's perplexity at this was only too soon changed to profound sorrow, when the mysterious veil which had obscured the affairs of the aristocratic Russian was suddenly torn aside.

"Alexander Samailoff, whose life and doings had for some time attracted the attention of the Berlin police, was at last unmasked.

"We find him as a forger and criminal impostor, confined in the Hausvoigtei. It appeared he was neither a count nor the son of a high Russian state official, but—a servant who had been travelling abroad with a Russian family, and had been dismissed on account of some misconduct. He had since then lived by his wits in the world, under different names, and had come to Berlin, too, in the character of a count. His tact, manners, and plausibility, had induced credulous people to advance him large sums of money on forged bills, which enabled him to carry on his part. How excellently he played it we have seen already.

"Samailoff persisted in usurping, during the period of his incarceration, his rank as count with the utmost effrontery, till the most convincing proofs had been procured that he was nothing but a low-born impostor. Then he relinquished all further attempts at imposition. The news of the real status of the handsome Russian, who had so entirely duped the highest

society, ran through the town like wildfire, and for weeks the only topic of conversation was this bold impostor.

"Most deeply mortified of all was, naturally, the talented artiste, whom Samailoff is said to have loved sincerely. The bold adventurer was sentenced to six years' penal servitude. Shortly after his release from prison he emerged again, it is said, in another part of Germany in his former favourite character.

"Since then, however, no more has been heard of him."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SONTAG FEVER.

Sontag in Vienna—She comes to Berlin—Creates a Furore—The Amorous Sontag Guards—Nina Sontag—Opinions on Kissing—Sontag a Gambler—A Story of our Days—Lord Clanwilliam—Sontag Bids Farewell to Berlin—The Parting Scene—Sontag in Paris—At Weimar—She Returns to Berlin—Catalani—Sontag in England—She Again Visits Paris—Her Accident—She Becomes Countess Rossi—Her Farewell Performances in Berlin—She Appears in Society—Count Rossi—Countess Rossi Returns to the Stage in London—Her Tour with Thalberg, Calzolari, Lablache, and Piatti—Her Death—Her Last Resting Place.

"Once more, ye muses, saddle me the hippogriff to ride back into the old Sontag time,"[1] I feel inclined to say, slightly parodying old Wieland's famous lines.

Who is there to recall with me, as it were in a dream, that old time of half a century ago, when all Berlin was in one sweet frenzy, which found vent again and again in the exultant cry of, "Henriette

[1] Referring to the first lines of Wieland's "Oberon."

Sontag, Sontag, Sontag, the unique, incomparable, divine!"

Few contemporaries are left, I dare say, who, with a melancholy smile around the white lips and a glittering tear in the weary eye, can remember that joyous madness. Their descendants will smile at it, and compassionately shake their heads at the Sontag craze of their grandfathers and grandmothers.

And yet it was fair and merry, that old bygone Sontag time, fair and merry as the sunny spring with its fragrant splendour of flowers, and its sweet songs of birds. Fair like the bright time of youth.

It was, in fact, spring, when the so-called Sontag fever, like an epidemical intoxication, came over Berlin in one single May night, and without check or abatement seized the ears, eyes, hearts, brains, tongues, hands, and pens of the whole population, and ever more dangerously, more incurably.

The young Königstadt theatre, although counting its age only by months, was labouring under a serious attack of deficit. The seven directors—six financiers and a lawyer—were in their despair looking out for a deliverer. Who was it that spoke the first hope-reviving word, "Only a prima-donna can save us, only Henriette Sontag from Vienna?" History has forgotten to chronicle the name of this benefactor of mankind. Perhaps it was my admirer and enthusiastic lover of art, Justizrath Ludolff.

Ludolff had been in Vienna in May, 1824, on business, together with his young friend Ludwig Rellstab, and there both had for the first time heard and seen Henriette Sontag.

Rellstab remained pretty cold as regards the young

songstress, for in his autobiography, which has unfortunately remained a fragment, he only says concerning this event,—

"To touch upon yet another musical affair, I may state that we heard the celebrated cantatrice, Henriette Sontag, here for the first time singing in a concert, and, I own, we were very much surprised at her uncommonly great power of vocal execution. I must, however, also confess that, however great the charm she possessed in her well-developed technique, and however much this was supported by her graceful personal charms, I could not have predicted from it the success which the artiste afterwards won. It may remain doubtful if this was due to my insensibility, or whether her talent had afterwards so much increased."

Indeed, the Viennese generally did not make much fuss about young Henriette. Thus, so late as October, 1824, a Vienna correspondent writes very coldly to the *Stuttgarter Morgenblatt*:—

"The young singer, Sontag, gave for her benefit 'La Donna del Lago,' in which she had taken herself the part of 'Elena.' She has represented many parts very happily, but no important progress is noticeable in this talented artiste. It is true that, under present circumstances, she has few occasions for playing, and loses herself more and more in a certain mannerism, which, on the one hand, is laudable, since it arises from a desire to emulate a great pattern; but which, on the other hand, proves an obstacle to the natural development of her own artistic talent. We understand that she is soon going to Darmstadt, to accept

an engagement at the court theatre of that place; and being recommended by a youthful and graceful exterior, she will there, in more than one sense, be a welcome acquisition. The musical society in Prague, where she sang this summer, conferred upon her the diploma of honorary member."

Only two masters had even at that period recognized the great importance of young Henriette: Karl Maria von Weber, inasmuch as he wrote "Euryanthe" for her in 1823; and Beethoven, who, in his great concert in May, 1824, entrusted to her the solos of his mass, beside Karoline Ungher, and treated the two beautiful songstresses to a quaint feast and choice sweet wine in his chaotic bachelor apartments. But the wine agreed so badly with the gay young girls, that Henriette had to excuse herself for not appearing at the opera next day. Regarding this dinner, Frau Ungher Sabatier writes quite sentimentally half a century afterwards:—

"I see the plain room still before me, where a rope served as a bell-pull, a large table stood in the centre, upon which was served the goodly roast beef, with the exquisite sweet wine. I see the second room adjoining, entirely filled up to the ceiling with music for the orchestra. In the midst of it stood the grand piano which Field, if I am not mistaken, had sent to Beethoven from London. Jette Sontag and I stepped into this room as into a church, and we tried, unfortunately in vain, to sing something to the beloved master. I remember my saucy remark that he did not understand how to write vocal music, because one note in my part of the symphony lay too high for me.

Whereupon he answered, 'Just learn it; the note will come, no fear.' This word has from that day spurred me to work."

Of Jette Sontag, Beethoven said that she was diligent, but had not much training.

Weber, however, valued Sontag's "Euryanthe" quite as highly as that of Schröder-Devrient, although the two were as different as possible in the conception and execution of the part. Yet he did not venture to hand the entire laurel wreath to either of them as the superior. If Schröder-Devrient's "Euryanthe" stood out by its vigour, majesty, and passion, Henriette Sontag charmed the audience in this part by her grace, loveliness, and heartfelt fervour.

Having this picture of the beautiful Henriette in his heart, Ludolff had returned to Berlin, and his mouth was never tired of singing her praise. And when it was certain that the young singer would leave Vienna on the disbanding of the opera, a delegate of the Königstadt theatre had hastened to her, to win the sweet nightingale for Berlin, but returned without having succeeded. Mamma Sontag was a very politic dame. She understood how to sharpen the appetite for her *bonne-bouche*. She first produced her on several Austrian stages, and then in May, 1825, came with her to Leipzig on a starring tour.

On the first news of this reaching them, several directors of the Königstadt theatre—Justizrath Kunowsky, Martin Ebert, rich Herz Beer and his wife Amalie, the parents of Meyerbeer, and the clerk to the theatre, Karl von Holtei—hastened with special post-horses to Leipzig to hear the wondrous little bird, and if possible to catch it. When they

found in Leipzig other bird-catchers present beside themselves—among them, also a delegate from the Berlin court opera—then they quickly clapped horses to their carriages again, and went to meet the prima-donna the distance of a day's journey on the way to Prague.

Such touching zeal, and a salary of 7000 thalers for a season, mother Sontag and Henriette could not resist. They signed the contract with the Königstadt theatre, which, however, was obliged—however reluctantly—to take mamma Franziska and sister Nina Sontag into the bargain.

And then the sweet nightingale came to Berlin, was seen, and had conquered before she had sung a note in public. The Sontag fever was already raging in the whole town. The Kaiserstrasse, in which the goddess lived, was never free from carriages, horsemen, or pedestrians, who wanted to visit or see the adored one, or to be seen by her.

But when on the 3rd of August, the birthday of Friedrich Wilhelm III., she stepped for the first time before the Berlin lamps as "Isabella" in Rossini's "Italienerin in Algier," then all Berlin was like one great boys' school, full of droll delight and wild enthusiasm.

How many millions of times the name of the divine Henriette was breathed—uttered joyfully—shouted in frenzy—and expressed in moanings by the lips of Berliners in those days! "Henriette" was the permanent watchword, and "Sontag" the universal rallying cry. Where two met in the street, they called out to each other these words with enthusiasm. At all parties, in beer and wine-houses, the sole con-

versation was about *her*. The fish and vegetable-wives upon the Gensdarmen markt scarcely thought any more of their carps and onions, but raved about the "Italienerin in Algier;" the cabbies on their boxes spelled out in rapture in the newspapers the endless sonnets addressed to the "göttliche Jette."

The laurel-trees stood soon leafless, and the prices of nosegays rose, so many wreaths and bouquets were night after night showered upon the intoxicating "Italienerin." At the booking-office of the Königstadt theatre there was a perfect fight for tickets, and at night in the crush many a tail of a dress-coat, many a lady's shoe and false tress of hair were lost. But whosoever had not yet seen the "Italienerin" was looked upon as not up to the mark, and was regarded with a compassionate, half-contemptuous smile.

It was dismally empty in the royal opera and play-house as soon as Henriette Sontag appeared in the Königstadt, and even the most faithful of our old and young "theatre-guards," who came nevertheless from habit, spirit of opposition, or because they had been unable to get a ticket "on the other side of the Spree," looked at us players and singers compassionately, and allowed their thoughts to wander over to the Königstadt.

And what ill-bred remarks we had to hear! When an enthusiast persisted in regaling the charming singer Karoline Seidler Wranitzky with the triumphs of her rival, and spoke of the flowers with which she was overwhelmed night after night upon the Königstadt stage, the Seidler at last answered petulantly, "Let them kill her with flowers, I don't mind."

A lady who had never shown me much good-will said to me in an offensively sympathising way, "Do not afflict yourself too much that people speak of Sontag alone, and find her alone beautiful and amiable. This star, too, will set, and then those that are pale now will rise again once more."

One of my old admirers kept repeating, "Do not trouble yourselves on the dramatic stage. It's all of no use. There is for the moment in Berlin only one artist that excites interest. It is foolish to contend with Henriette Sontag."

Is it strange, then, that I was annoyed with the new phœnix without having seen her? Not every one may, like Mdme. Milder Hauptmann, when an indiscreet person asked her, "Is it your opinion, too, that Nanette Schechner is the most splendid 'Emmeline' of our age?" answer proudly, "Since I heard Milder Hauptman as 'Emmeline' I do not indulge in an opinion about other Emmelines!"

In this by no means agreeable humour I was found one day by my revered music-master, Ludwig Berger. He looked excited and annoyed. Of course, my first question was, "Well, what say you about Henriette Sontag?"

Then he broke forth angrily —

"No, I cannot endure this mania any longer. Here, at least, with you I had hoped to find a refuge from the eternal Sontag! Sontag! Sontag! and now you too talk of her before I have yet put down my hat. I have come to tell you that I shall be unable to give you lessons for the next four weeks. I must leave Berlin for some time, breathe other air; the Sontag epidemic of this place kills me."

"Tell me, have you seen already the bird phœnix, and heard her?"

"No, nor do I want to have anything to do with the wonderful beast. I am more than satiated with this eternal Sontag! Sontag! Sontag! Wherever I show myself, in the street, in society, in the tavern, I am immediately accosted, 'Isn't she the queen of all the nightingales? A very angel! Did you hear that yesterday in Stralau she ate fried eel and potatoes in their jackets, and drank Weisbier? I hope that she will be none the worse for that! A divine girl!' I only need to put my head out at the door to hear every apprentice boy roar, every seamstress twitter at me, with the sickening lines from the 'Italienerin,'—

Ich rufe Dich, Geliebte,
Mit meiner Liebe Tönen;

of course meaning the divine Sontag. If I take up a newspaper, my eye is caught at once by Sontag! Sontag! Sontag! When and whither she took a drive—at what party she passed the evening—what she had said and sung, eaten and drunk. And what weak witticism and puns about Sontag (Sunday), the tenor Jäger (hunter), the bass-singer Wächter (watcher), one hears wherever one goes! 'Der Wächter der Sontag-Jägerei' (the watcher of the Sunday hunt) is one of the most innocent among them. The latest Sontag pun which has been hurled into my teeth, at least a dozen times on my way here is this: 'Why does the Sontag sing mostly *mezza voce?*' 'At the request of the directors, for in this way everyone must hear her in that part at least twice in order to hear her altogether.' No, I cannot endure this lunacy any longer. Perhaps in four weeks Berlin may have turned a little

more rational, and may remember that it has in its midst a Milder, Schuzl, and Seidler, who are also god-inspired songstresses. I leave for Frankfort on the Oder."

I had never yet seen my friend, who was generally gentle and just, so excited and bitter. Then suddenly a good thought struck me, and I said —

"Revered master, I have not heard the Sontag yet either. What would you say if we—before you leave for Frankfort on the Oder—went together to hear the 'Italienerin in Algier?' We can then form our own opinion about this new goddess of the Berliners. Perhaps in doing so we may find to our satisfaction that this present frenzy has been called forth by the charm of novelty only; in that case it is sure to pass over in a little. But if we ourselves should be bewitched!"

"Never! never!" said Berger. But he drove, for all that, with my mother and me to the Königstadt the night after. We advanced but slowly, for the long, narrow Königstrasse in its entire length was crammed full of carriages and pedestrians whose course lay towards the "Italienerin."

At last we were seated in our expensive places. The fashionable audience was in gay animation. A humming and singing of "Sontag! Sontag!" went through the densely crowded house. Friends and acquaintances passed to Berger and us, and congratulated us that we likewise should soon see and hear the goddess. "Justizrath" Ludolph did not desist till I had accepted his large Paris opera-glasses, to be able thoroughly to enjoy and admire his favourite through them.

During the overture, which was conducted in a very

spirited manner by the youthful, curly-headed little Stegmeyer, the gay bustle and hum continued without restraint. She had not yet appeared—*she* for whose sake alone all had assembled here.

At last there came on the scene a delicate, graceful little dame in a sky-blue costume, wearing a little white hat with feather, which enframed a charming, fresh, girlish, finely-moulded forget-me-not face, with fair locks, blue, bright eyes, and a sweet little mouth, which showed, when it smiled, in the sweetest, gayest manner, the most beautiful pearly teeth. The whole, standing or in motion, formed a lovely picture of happy youth, and harmonious gracefulness, but was rather pretty than beautiful.

With what an outburst of joyful enthusiasm she was received, buried amidst flowers and wreaths! When she bowed in acknowledgment, her child-like little face was radiant with the fulness of pure happiness, so that one could not help feeling gratified at her triumphs, and that without any grudge in one's heart.

And then she opened her little rose-bud mouth, just as a little wood-bird opens its beak; so naturally, so unaffectedly, and the sweetest clear bird-warble filled the house with joyous tones.

Her voice was neither full nor strong, but pure as a bell, transparent as a pearl, with a ring of silver, sonorous, especially in the medium tones, very flexible, every sound distinctly articulated, and of seductive sweetness. And how sweet were her quavers, like the clear warbling of the lark! Then again rang out her peculiarly high falsetto in the most difficult passages and "roulades"—as accurate as a tiny flute-clock.

Incomparably, enchantingly she sang *mezza* and *sotto voce*. And all this came forth with such playful ease, and without effort, from her pretty little mouth, which I never saw distorted (as afterwards I saw, in the ugliest way, Catalani's, when she sang), that the listener could with the greatest pleasure give himself up to enjoyment.

With charming sauciness the "Italienerin" sang and played the bantering duo with amusing "Taddeo" (Spitzeder), whose *vis comica* even Sontag could not resist.

In the second act she appeared magnificently dressed *en Turque*. At the conclusion of her song, "O my Lindoro," at the words, "Dear Turk! dear Turk!" she so enraptured the audience by her purest, most elegant *staccato* that the cheering was endless.

I, too, was overcome, and heartily joined in the universal applause, although I found that people were just going a little too far in the paroxysm of their transports.

My friend Berger beside me also melted more and more, praised her for the most part, found fault in some respects,—for example, her too frequent *mezza voce*, her sometimes too conspicuous *colorature*, a certain want of *finesse* and warmth,—but nevertheless wound up his criticism by saying, "Henriette Sontag is not the greatest singer I ever heard, but certainly one of the most lovable." And he did *not* run away to Frankfort on the Oder. Still Ludwig Berger always maintained, and I had to subscribe to it then, and do so the same this day, that that wild Sontag enthusiasm was carried much too far, and was an unhealthy symptom of that age.

If the people of Berlin had then read the criticism of

Frau von Varnhagen they would have smashed all her windows the night following.

Ludwig Robert jokingly called Sontag's singing, "lisping of flutes and warbling of nightingales."

The "Italienerin in Algier" Sontag had to repeat upon the Königstadt theatre forty-two times. Altogether she appeared on that stage not less than 211 times, in seventeen different parts, during the two years between the 3rd of August, 1825, and the end of September, 1827, to the never-wearying delight of the Berliners. I have myself heard her several times on this stage, thus as "Bertha," in the "Schnee;" as "Angelina," in Rossini's "Cinderella;" "Sophie," in "Sargines;" as "Anna," in the "Weisse Dame;" and as "Mathilde," in "Corradino;" and I grew fonder and fonder of her, not only as a singer, but as an amiable, cheerful, and in spite of the intoxicating homage paid her, a modest girl, after we had become nearer acquainted in society. There she was naively merry and often giddy as a child. And what an amiable, agreeable colleague she, the much admired artiste, was, when afterwards we appeared side by side at public concerts, and in the representations at court; and I even had to sing in Isouard's old opera "Joconde" the part of "Edile," while Sontag sang that of "Hannchen."

Every jealousy was banished; we moved in the same circles, danced at the same balls, and spent especially never-to-be-forgotten beautiful hours, in the hospitable house, in the Thiergarten, of Justizrath Ludolf. There Sontag lived during a whole summer, and put up with a small spare room, for she felt happy and at home in the amiable art-loving family.

There excursions into the country were arranged; thence long walks taken; we would dance, act charades, and make up *tableaux vivants;* and Henriette was the most enterprising and wildest of all. She was a daring horsewoman, and even walked upon high stilts through the garden, not a little proud of the skill she had acquired.

Once my mother said to her, "But, my dear, what if you were to slip and hurt yourself?"

"God forbid, madame Frau Rittmeisterinn!" she cried with a ringing laugh, holding up one stilt for a few seconds, and enjoying our astonishment like a child.

That was Sontag's most innocent and cheerful time, as she often assured people afterwards; and she ever remembered, as I did, a Christmas Eve in Ludolf's homely house. We and some intimate friends of the house were celebrating Christmas in the evening. Little presents had been hidden under flowers, and amid laughing and merrymaking, they were sought and found. When the pretty things were being mutually admired there sounded from the adjoining saloon,—

"Kommt a Vögli gefloge, setzt si nieder auf mei Fusz."

"Ah, the Tyrolese," we cried in the most joyful surprise, and listened to their sweet singing.

Our kind host had invited the brothers and sisters Rainer from Fügin in the Zillerthal, who were in great favour at Berlin then, and had sung in the opera-house and at court, and were not easy to get for private entertainments, since the most prominent families in Berlin were anxious to entertain their

visitors with the Tyrolese. There were of them three brothers and a sister; they sang popular songs (ballads) with really splendid voices. After they had sung "Steh nur auf, steh nur auf, schöner Schweizerbu," Sontag took the sister to the piano, for she wanted to hear to what giddy height her voice would reach. They tried, Sontag softly striking each note on the piano and singing likewise, but soon she cried out, laughing, "I cannot go any higher." Thereupon she yielded to the request of the Tyrolese, and sat down at the piano also to sing something. She chose Mozart's divine "Ihr, die ihr Triebe des Herzens kennt." We thanked her with rapture. The Tyrolese said very calmly in their *patois* nodding their heads as they spoke, "Du singscht recht arti!" Our roars of laughter were an answer to this praise, and Henriette seemed to be greatly amused at hearing that she could "sing very prettily."

Then the Tyrolese had to show us their "Ländler" (country-dance), the true, simple "Ländler." The eldest brother danced it with their sister, the two others singing the accompanying dance air. It was not long before all of us were turning round to the chanted "Ländler" air. Oh, how happy and merry we were!

Ludolf wanted to prepare another triumph for his idol Henriette, and invited one of the Tyrolese to say which of us ladies had the prettiest foot.

We did not object to the fun in order not to disappoint our amiable host, and stood in a circle around our judge, each showing the point of her foot, Henriette placing her "Cinderella" foot with much grace beside my shoe.

The Tyrolese went very conscientiously about his task, examined very calmly and attentively the ladies themselves, as well as the point of their foot, and, oh, horror ! gave the palm to mine.

The Justizrath said in embarrassment, "Herr Tyroler, I fear you have made a mistake. Here, here" (pointing to Sontag), "here is the lady with the smallest foot !"

But the "Herr Tyroler" was not to be abashed, and replied with perfect equanimity, "Ja, de do ischt de klaanschte und hat de klaanschte fuss. De do aber" (pointing to me), "ischt gross und hat doch e klaane fuss ! Also hat de do den priss." ("Yes, she is the smallest, and of course has the smallest foot ; but this one is tall, and still has a small foot, so the prize is hers.")

It is scarcely possible to describe the merriment that followed this Solomonic decision ; only the Justizrath and I did not join in it. Both of us were in consternation, which seemed to heighten Sontag's hilarity, for, amid laughter, she repeated several times "I don't take it amiss, you know, dear, ha ! ha ! ha ! I *am* the 'klaanschte" (smallest), ha ! ha ! and poor Justizrath cannot get over *de do* (yon one)."

When saying "Good night" Sontag said, "I never enjoyed myself so well all my life !" At the same time she invited the Tyrolese to see her next morning in her lodgings in the Alexander-platz, opposite the theatre, where she resided with her mother and sister Nina, and treated the gay, natural singers to a splendid luncheon.

Also the king took a great interest in these Tyrolese, and they had to sing in the palace. He only regretted

that one understood so little of the words of the songs, and requested the leader to translate into High German some of the verses, which he would then have printed for the court.

The Tyrolese went to England, and sang there at the Duchess of Kent's, and in the most fashionable circles.

Towards her mother and her young sister Nina, a good, dear creature, Henriette Sontag was exceedingly affectionate and self-sacrificing.

Her mother was a clever woman, but an actress of routine. Even now, during Henriette's engagement in Leipzig, in May, 1825, she had appeared upon the stage, which was under the excellent management of Hofrath Kuster, in the characters of "Mary Stuart," "Baroness Waldhull," and as "Elsbeth," in the "Drei Wahrzeichen" with success, but without exactly carrying away her audience to enthusiasm.

I have seen her play several times at the Königstadt theatre, cleverly, and with good sense, but I missed in her play the warming pulsation of the heart. Besides, owing to her very great—I might say almost alarming — shortsightedness, she had acquired the habit of blinking with her eyes in an unpleasant manner, and poor Nina did the same.

After mother Sontag had become more intimate with us she was fond of relating events of her past life with astonishing frankness, considering her many love-affairs.

When only fifteen years of age she, then Franziska Marklof, had married (in Aix-la-Chapelle) Franz Anton Sontag, an actor in a wandering troupe of comedians. He was very much liked as "Buffo."

Franziska played merry lovers, and sang in vaudevilles and operettas. In the winter of 1805-6, both played in Koblenz. There Madame Franziska was delivered of a little girl, on the 3rd of January at six o'clock in the morning, to whom Mademoiselle Gertrudis Löf, a neighbour, stood chief sponsor, and who received the names of Gertrudis Walpurgis Sontag, as may be read in the registrar's records in Koblenz.

This Gertrudis Walpurgis Sontag is said to be our world-renowned nightingale, who afterwards—from some whim or other—adopted the Christian name of Henrietta, alias "Jettel."

"The words I hear, indeed, but I lack the faith;" for I have several reasons for believing that Henrietta had been born some years before that date, had been reduced in age by her politic mother to suit the prodigy-loving public, and that her proper certificate of baptism had simply been exchanged for that of her younger sister, Gertrudis Walpurgis, who died very young. Thus Ernst Genast says in his "Diary of an Old Actor," according to the information given him by a friend of the family Sontag, who knew the daughters Henriette and Nanni (afterwards Nina) when they were children, that Henriette was born in 1804. And Karl von Holtei, who was a passionate admirer of the beautiful Henriette, in those days of the Berlin Sontag-epidemic, and was on very intimate terms with her, mentions 1803 as the year of her birth. But what does it matter? Frau Sontag related about little Henriette, "I went with the tender child to a fortune-teller, who prophesied to me that the child's fame would one day re-echo over

the whole world—far over lands and seas." At the early age of seven, Jettchen played and sang "Lilli" in the "Donauweibchen." Soon afterwards her father, who had the misfortune to break a leg on the stage, died. Frau Franziska found an engagement at the court-theatre in Darmstadt, but it was of short duration. She handed over her two little girls to her mother in Mainz, and went out into the world to seek a new engagement. Iffland was so well pleased with her *début* that he wanted to engage her, but before he could do so he died.

Frau Franziska at last found an engagement under Liebich's management in Prague. Thither Henriette and Nina followed their mother from Frankfort on the Maine, quite alone in the mail-coach, being handed like parcels from station to station, from conductor to conductor. A sad journey! How often must Henriette have thought of this drive when afterwards, with the luxury of a princess, she went on her triumphant tours round the world!

In Prague, little Henriette made her *début* with two airs in Wranitzky's "Obéron," so successfully, that Director Liebich had her educated as a professional singer in the conservatoire, particularly by the excellent singing-mistress Madame Czegca. In May, 1818, she already sang very acceptably the music of "Benjamin" in Méhul's "Joseph in Egypt." Two years later she celebrated her first great triumph in the part of the princess in "Johann von Paris." Everybody was enraptured with her silvery voice and her charming little person.

But most charmed of all was the handsome Lieutenant Wilhelm Marsano, known to all the

ladies of Prague as the "irresistible:" he was also the author of several good theatrical plays. He was Jettchen's first-loved admirer, till she went (1820) for four years to Vienna, as German and Italian prima donna. There Lieutenant Wilhelm Marsano was succeeded in the favour of the cantatrice by the smart cavalier Count Eduard Klam-Gallas. In Berlin, first Karl von Holtei, then the English ambassador, Lord Clanwilliam, were the most ardent admirers of beautiful Henriette, and for a long time the latter was considered the most favoured, till a handsome and talented violinist of the theatre-orchestra ousted the noble lord.

Henriette Sontag was not free from coquetry, or insensible to the pleasure of wholesale admiration; but who could have been angry with her for that, seeing that it caused her a child-like pleasure to see more and more admirers struggling round about her?

This motley menagerie did not even lack a king-lion, whom Henriette's sweet singing and charming person—for she knew how to show it to the best advantage, both on the stage and in society—her alluring eye-play, child-like talk, and fascinating coquetry had strongly captivated, without, for all that, owing to his native shyness, emboldening him to demand the lion's share for himself.

I shall soon revert to the amorous Sontag-guards, old and young.

Even Madame Sontag was not inclined yet to relinquish the sweet game of love. But with her, love became a blind, reckless passion. She had at that time notorious relations with Wegener, the excellent actor of the Königstadt. People even talked of a marriage. Then her lover died. He was the father

of her son, Karl Sontag, the favourite *bon vivant* of the present stage. Poor Franz Anton Sontag did not live long enough to see many of the twelve children of his Franziska.

How different was young Nina Sontag compared with her mother and sister! I believe she never had an admirer, and never desired to have one! Even when quite a girl she was remarkably serious and reserved, and old beyond her years. We always called her "little granny." She played small parts, but without taking an interest in them, and also without possessing much talent; she just played them to please her mother and sister. To them she was devoted with a truly unselfish love. When her sister was having her most intoxicating triumph I feel sure she never sighed a wish that she could have been as beautiful, as talented, as much admired. She was sincerely delighted with her sister's brilliant successes. She was without the least envy—a most devoted soul, even then an exceedingly earnest and pious Catholic, who just tormented herself about her "wicked life" by pangs of conscience. On being once asked what would be her supreme wish, she gently answered, "Peace and quiet, far from the world!" This, her wish, was granted to her afterwards.

I still have a lively recollection of a conversation which was very characteristic both of Madame Sontag and her two daughters. Once Henriette had modestly expressed a wish to visit the "Pfaueninsel," near Potsdam, the favourite resort of her royal patron (King Friedrich Wilhelm III.), then much famed for its splendid flowers and wild animals, when "Justizrath" Ludolf, the captain of all the Sontag

admirers, at once arranged a grand excursion by land and water to the place. We started on a glorious summer morning, very early, in open carriages. At the Glinicke bridge we entered gondolas, decked with festive bunting and garlands, and amid singing and music landed on the fairy island.

The forenoon was passed in rustic games and sauntering about. Upon a great lawn we played a number of different games, such as blind-man's buff, "les graces," shuttle-cock, and other more peculiarly German national games. Henriette was in running and jumping the gayest and smartest of us all, to the delight of her old and young guards, but also to their secret apprehension, lest the sweet nightingale might get overheated and catch a cold or sore throat. But she laughed at all their anxieties with a silvery, ringing laugh, saying, "Ah, this won't do Jettel any harm; and I am so happy!"

During the splendid dinner under the old lime-trees, and when the foaming champagne was going round, of course the conversation would also turn to the chapter of sweet love, and eventually to that of kisses in general, and of hand-kisses in particular.

Madame Sontag said in a decided tone," I have never yet kissed a man's hand, though I loved him ever so madly, and never, never shall I condescend to do so!"

"But why not, mother?" interjected Henriette, gaily. "I could willingly kiss the hand of a beloved and revered husband, without thereby disgracing myself!"

The whole of the old and young guards cried enthusiastically, clapping their hands, "Brava! Brava! Divine words, sweet angel!" and now demanded

that each lady at the table should express an opinion on this theme.

Nina Sontag said in her grandmotherly way —

"I have no opinion about kissing, and have never thought about it. But I am sure of this, that I shall never kiss either a man's mouth or hand, just as little as he mine, for I shall never marry!"

We all laughed at this strange answer of the sixteen-year-old young girl and her great earnestness over it. And yet young Nina spoke the truth!

When my turn had come, I said boldly —

"If I had to marry a man twenty years my senior, because he had made great sacrifices for the sake of me and my family, I should, from gratitude, not object to kiss his hand, perhaps even prefer it to his mouth. But a young husband would be required to kiss my hand!"

Of course the whole of the Sontag-guards cried that the divine Henriette had got the prize.

Truly touching was Henriette's love for her younger sister Nina. This love was indeed so blind that *la diva* asserted aloud on every occasion, that Nina's voice and talent for singing were much more considerable than her own —

"Nina will soon have put me in the shade on the stage by her beauty, singing, play, and fame!" and whoever ventured to raise the least objection was soundly rated by Henriette.

Altogether Henriette showed on every occasion great kindness of heart and much good nature. I once saw her come, very weary and fagged, from a rehearsal in the Königstadt theatre. Excitedly she said to "Justizrath" Kunowsky —

"I cannot appear to-morrow in the part of 'Weisse Dame.' In fact, I must not sing so often. You overtax my strength. I shall be ill. Please countermand the 'Weisse Dame' for to-morrow."

But when Kunowsky spoke of the great loss the management would incur in consequence, since all the tickets had been sold already for next day's performance, then she appeared after all at night, and that as the most charming "Weisse Dame."

Only once Henriette thwarted the management of the Königstadt as far as their exchequer was concerned —to please an old friend.

Moscheles writes with reference to this in his diary on the 21st of November, 1826—

"Concert day. Fräulein Sontag, who was not permitted to lend me her active aid, because the managers of the Königstadt refused their permission to any singing of hers out of the theatre, assisted me passively by reporting herself hoarse, and instead of singing in 'Sargin,' she came with my wife to my concert. When I thanked the celebrated singer, she said, with the sweet smile peculiar to her, 'But, dear Moscheles, should not an old Vienna friend help to frustrate the cabal of a theatrical manager? Jettel is still Jettel.'"

Henriette behaved also most generously towards an old rival who had formerly caused her much vexation.

Once Unter den Linden she heard a little ragged girl sing, in the purest Viennese dialect, Bäuerle's popular song, "'s giebt nur a Kaiserstadt, 's giebt nur a Wien," which had become a favourite song also with the people of Berlin through Holtei's "Wiener in Berlin." Henriette gave the little singer some

trifle, and then kindly asked about her circumstances, her parents, and how she had come to Berlin.

Then the child told her frankly —

"I was born in Vienna. My mother is very poor, and blind. She was once a splendid singer. Amalie Steininger is her name."

Amalie Steininger! with what emotion did Henriette Sontag hear this name! Amalie Steininger, the Vienna prima donna, had pursued young Henriette Sontag, on her first coming to Vienna from Prague, with envy and malice, with intrigues and cabals, from the very day of her arrival, and had not been satisfied till she had succeeded in driving her away.

And now this old enemy was a blind beggar. But Henriette neither showed triumph nor felt it. With a tear in her eye she went to see the old colleague; never by a word did she remind her of the old times in Vienna, and magnanimously provided for the poor artiste till her death, and, further, charged herself with the education of her daughter!

Beside so much light, I may be permitted, without suspicion of ill-feeling, to point to some small shadows.

Next to her skilful coquetry I only know of one weakness in Henriette Sontag—a strange passion, which even then showed itself in a marked degree, and which was to cause so many bitter, sorrowful hours to Countess Rossi afterwards, nay, which perhaps was among the causes that compelled her Excellency the Ambassadress to sing again for money—her passion for gambling! During the most animated *soirée*, the gayest ball, Henriette could sit in an adjoining room at the card-table with the gallant Russian ambassador Alopeus, and for hours, with feverish

haste, and perhaps twenty packs of cards, play the then fashionable game of *Grab*.

But even this the Sontag enthusiasts considered *genial*, charming, divine, and whatever were the ruling Sontag epithets.

Then, suddenly, in March, 1826, there fell from an unclouded sky, like an icy hailstorm, into the fever-burning Sontag Berlin, a little book of eleven sheets, bearing the title, "Henriette, die schöne Sängerin: A story of our days. By Freimund Zuschauer." Leipzig, F. L. Herbig, 1826.

What a noise and lamentation this produced, as if the world was to come to an end. The old and young Sontag guards went raging through the town, burning to wreak vengeance on the abominable pamphleteer. Beautiful Henriette cried, and wringing her hands, ran to her august protector at the palace, asking satisfaction. The good king immediately ordered the book to be confiscated and prohibited throughout all Prussia. The more fanatical of the Sontag enthusiasts took post-horses to Leipzig and bought up the rest of the accursed pamphlet, and solemnly handed it over to the flames.

Thus "Henriette, die schöne Sängerin," has become a great literary rarity. At that time the few copies that had escaped destruction went stealthily from hand to hand, and were devoured in secret. For weeks Berlin talked of nothing but this outrage.

To-day we scarcely comprehend all this, and smile at the harmlessness of the little book. We are accustomed in our comic papers and polemic *brochures* to something more peppery and biting. Indeed, our modern songstresses would be delighted if a *littérateur*

would write for them eleven sheets of such puff as that written for Henriette. Freimund Zuschauer has nothing but praise, although not always in the most delicate lauguage, for the celebrated singer, and his witticism and sarcasm are only aimed at the host of her admirers who, as a truth, did suffer to a silly extent from Sontag-frenzy fifty years ago. But even this wit and sarcasm sound to us harmless to-day.

But let the reader judge for himself. Among my papers I find a copy of the "shöne Henriette," which escaped the *auto-da-fè* of that period. I here quote the most characteristic parts of it. First of all the beginning literally, with my explanations in parentheses—

"The opera (in the Königstadt theatre) was at an end; but the volleys of applause which were to do appreciative honour to the talents of the young singer Henriette, who had just made her *début* as the newly-engaged member of the theatre, seemed to go on for ever. Ever anew the noisy clapping of thousands of eager hands was heard, mingled with the incessant call of the name of the beautiful dame. At last the curtain rose again. The lovely angel appeared in all the gracefulness with which she had charmed the audience the whole evening. Compared with the noise that now rang through the house, the previous clamour might be called silence. Everybody abandoned himself to the loudest outburst of transport. Only the young songstress herself was not allowed to express *her* feelings in words, and had to retire with silent bows; but her eyes, sparkling with pleasure, plainly betokened what she felt. However, almost plainer still spoke the looks of all the gentlemen, both young and old, in the theatre; none were there out of whose eyes

the god of love did not peep mockingly. Even old Field-Marshal von Rauwitz (General von Brauchitsch, commandant of Berlin)—upon whose head, grown grey in wars, one could scarcely count a single hair—even he, in his great age, seemed to be struck by an arrow against which he probably thought himself too securely armoured. For not only had he tried to arm his breast with a hard brazen armour against Cupid's shots, but his precaution went further, for even his face, not excluding the nose, he had, with the aid of Bacchus, who is a better workman in copper than Vulcan, covered with a purple coat of that glowing metal. His eyes, in order to be safe there also, had the same kind god, Bacchus, helped to turn into a glassy state. But Cupid, defying the defensive alliance, had nevertheless penetrated, how, the gods alone know; however, it was undoubted, for the adjutant heard the marshal say on leaving his box, 'I would forego the aroma of Pontac for three days, if thereby I could purchase one kiss from this awfully pretty girl!' and he could not have employed a stronger affirmation. 'Major Regelino' (Zechelin) had suffered in a similar way, and, though he had almost become a fixture in the Casino, consented this once to miss his game, and to dream in the opera, for he had probably heard nothing, so much had the young singer blinded, nay, stunned him. When he entered his carriage he called out to the coachman, 'To the Königstadt theatre!' which he was just leaving.

"More than these, two royal counsellors, 'Hemmstoff' (Hermstorff) and 'Wicke' (Wilke), intimate friends through similarity of artistic inclinations and theatrical habits, I say still more were these captivated

by the wondrous phenomenon. Wicke allowed his languishing eye to linger once more upon the drawn curtain, then he said, 'Friend, what is life without the delight of love? Oh, now do I understand the tender-hearted poet!' 'True, very true!' Hemmstoff replied, in vain trying to put his hand through his hair (for the scythe of time had mowed from his head this stately ornament, and only from former habit made he this movement of negligent elegance); 'the poet speaks true, very true indeed. Oh, I feel confoundedly hungry. Let us eat something downstairs in the dining-rooms.'

"Now there (below) are found assembled the whole of the old and young Sontag guards over oysters and champagne, singing the praise of the beautiful Henriette. A French *abbé*, with a large pate still balder than Hemmstoff's; a tall, thin man in a blue dress-coat, wearing a cross in his button-hole, with grey, carefully-dressed hair, red face, puckered into a thousand folds, dressed like a dandy of twenty-five. He was styled Lieutenant-Colonel (von Freskow). Then came the young stage-manager of the Königstadt theatre, Karl von Holtei.' The author relates rather amusingly how all the art patrons of Berlin, especially those having names borrowed from the beasts of the forest, as Herz Beer (bear), Martin Ebers (boars), went to Leipzig in order to hear the beautiful Henriette there; how the Government, apprehending a dangerous political movement, refused passports to Leipzig for the time, and the Leipzig town militia would at last allow no Bär (bears) or Hirsch (harts) to pass. Wicke still indulges in the elegiacal reverie, 'Oh, the sweet, unspeakably sweet, lovely singer, richly gifted with

the most charming qualities! She looks at us smiling, and smiles again, and we weep, half with rapture, half with pain!'"

The third chapter, "Kabale und Liebe," shows us the prima-donna "Karoline" (Seidler-Wranitzky), and the first lover "Auguste" (Stich-Dühring) in tears and distress, on account of the triumphs of beautiful Henriette. All *their* admirers help to draw *her* triumphal chariot, and in the Alexanderstrasse; in front of No. 70, where Sontag dwells, carriages are constantly waiting. "Baurath Rahmer" (Krahmer), and step-mincing "Count Sellin" (Schwerin), "Justizrath Udorf" (Ludolff), banker "Rahlinger" (Krelinger), as well as his tall son with the spectacles and the carbonari cloak (the subsequent husband of Stich) "Lord Monday" (Clanwilliam)—all, all of them, and many more still, lie at Henriette's feet. The neglected favourites resolve to get criticisms fabricated against Henriette, and sonnets in honour of themselves. For the former purpose they have the critic "Scillobold Avecca" (Willibald Alexis), and editor "Quark" (?), which latter had once written a crazy opera, and loved to appear in shoes and white stockings, and a coffee-coloured surtout. For the sonnets in their own praise, the critic and poet "Rennstein" (Rellstab) is suggested—"a stout youth with a moustache, and a big pair of spectacles. He pretends to be wise and turns up his nose at everything." Karoline: "The same; but cannot turn up his nose much, since it is rather too flat." Then "Saffian (Saphir), an extremely witty and penetrating fellow with his journal *Höllenpost* (*Schnellpost*)." Gloomy "Raupenbach" (Raupach) is to

compose a severe article against Henriette; the same or perhaps "Puckbulz" (Spuckschulz), or "Ruhwitz" (Gubitz) is to publish in his paper *Der Menschenscheue* (*Freimüthige*), a song of praise on "Karoline" and "Auguste;" "Arion Sirion" (Ludwig Robert?) is to improvise mock poems in social meetings against Henriette; "Quintus Curtius Rufus" (Freideich von Uchtritz) is to write a new history of the life of Alexander in parody, on the great phœnix of the Alexanderplatz, and "Karoline's" constant admirer, the pale youth in the blue surtout—a referendary or young jurist, who afterwards married Karoline's daughter—shall fight for both.

In the saloon of the singer we meet all her faithful, among them the boorish "Lord Monday" (Chanwilliam, English ambassador to the court of Berlin), and the elegant Count Regenbogen. But above all others, the singer favours a young unknown musician of the orchestra, Werner (violinist of the orchestra).

Then the director of the Königstadt theatre "Brückbauer" (Justizrath Kunowsky, who built the Roch-Brücke over the Königsgraben), enters, pale, spattered with blood, and relates, "I was just at the office of my cashier, and inquired of him how he was getting on with the sale of the tickets for to-morrow's performance, in which you, dearest Henriette, will appear for the first time in the part of 'Amanda.' I receive the gratifying news that one single ticket is left. At this moment two officers, Lieutenant Spitzdegen von Witzleben, an accomplished dancer and swordsman, and Lieutenant Maulbeer, his bosom

friend, enter at the same time. Both ask, as if by agreement, if they can get tickets for 'Amanda.' The clerk, shrugging his shoulders, shows the last remaining one. As the harpies of old flung themselves on the meals of the poor King Phineas, these two rushed at the ticket. A contest arises; we try to intervene in vain! Already the swords are flashing in the hands of the two skilled champions; in vain we spring between them. The blows fall fast as lightning, and thick as hail; and before a minute has passed, Maulbeer, struck by a terrible blow, lies bleeding on the ground; and Spitzdegen, who had not escaped scathless, nevertheless triumphantly picked up the ticket with the point of his sword, and walked out with his precious booty." Henriette swoons.

Another duel ensues. The death-pale admirer of the singer Karoline, Agrippinus, he who wears the blue surtout, challenges in the rooms of Jagor, the purveyor to the court, the insulters of his lady-love, the most ardent admirers of Henriette, the lieutenant-colonel, counsellor Wicke, and banker Haifisch,

The duel takes place in Stralau. Wicke and Haifisch, in spite of the tropical heat, prepare to ward off cut and thrust by putting on three pairs of deer-skin breeches, likewise three woollen under-jackets, and thick silken neckties. Haifisch receives a cut upon his back part, but only his woollen or leather armour suffers a little damage. The duel is over. They proceed to take luncheon in Stralau. There Henriette has just arrived, together with her admirers, on an outing arranged by Lord Monday. His lordship had met with a mishap; he had encountered

on his way a company of artillerymen, whose gun-carriages blocked the way to his lordship, who was on horseback, which led to insults and blows on his part, for which his lordship in return received a thrashing at the hands of the gunners (a fact). All kinds of childlike games are engaged in on the meadow: cat and mouse, "Drittenjagen," widower's game, during which counsellor Wicke and banker Haifisch perspire terribly in their threefold armour. The day is brought to a close by a boating excursion on the lake. The boat is capsized; all are thrown into the water, but nobody is drowned.

"Werner and Henriette love each other. The beautiful singer is going to forsake the stage, and only give one last farewell concert. Haifisch and Wicke simultaneously offer her their hand for a rich marriage. But Henriette remains faithful to her Werner, and, as a reward, he turns out to be a rich count in disguise, 'Klammheim' (Klam-Gallas).

"Beautiful Karoline marries her pale knight Agrippinus and Augusta the Counsellor Hemmstoff." Thus this dreadful satire ends like a silly comedy.

The author concludes in these words, "In my merry good-humour I have made sport of many, or rather only derided their follies. He who indulges in them should not complain that they are laughed at. He who is not conscious of such folly, was not aimed at. And thus I hope that nobody will be angry with me."

But, oh, how angry they were. How they inquired for the unknown author! At first it was generally believed that Saphir was the criminal, but he had no difficulty in clearing himself of suspicion; he said, "Had I written 'Henriette, the Beautiful Singer,'

I should have written it better, wittier, and sharper. You may take my word for it, that Sontag and her 'guards' would not have got off so easily under my pen;" and one might give him credit for that.

Nevertheless, he received immediately after the publication of the wicked book a hint from high quarters. Varnhagen writes about it, the 16th of April —

"Mdlle. Sontag, the songstress, has applied to the king and requested him to protect her from the attacks which Herr Saphir was constantly indulging in, in his *Schnellpost*. The king issued a privy order to his minister Schuckmann, and the latter a rescript to Saphir, in which he was forbidden all personal attacks, and more especially any directed against Mdlle. Sontag."

Then it was said that "Karl von Holtei was the author, that he especially wanted to avenge himself on Lord Clanwilliam, because the rich Englishman ousted the poor German poet from the heart of the beautiful singer. Indeed, Holtei is the only man who is praised in the book." Lord Clanwilliam sought to kill Holtei with his looks, and did cut him in the street.

At last Ludwig Rellstab had to acknowledge the authorship. Now the whole of the Sontag guards were down upon him. He received I do not know how many challenges. His paternal friend Ludolff broke with him. Lord Clanwilliam brought a law-suit against him at the Kammergericht, at the instance of the foreign minister; Rellstab was found guilty of slander in two instances, and sentenced to three months' confinement in a fortress, which he underwent in Spandau during the summer of 1828.

But as years passed on, Henriette, the beautiful singer, conquered even Rellstab's critical ire, and he became her warmest supporter in the *Vossische Zeitung*.

After this scandal Lord Clanwilliam disappeared from Berlin for some time; then he returned with the old fervour to the feet of his goddess. He gave a splendid supper to her and Catalani, and it was generally believed that Henriette Sontag would shortly become Lady Clanwilliam.

With her admirers, and in reality that meant the whole of Berlin, the Sontag frenzy became all the more enthusiastic after the publication of "Henriette, the Beautiful Singer." The unique, incomparable, divine one had now become at the same time a martyr.

* * * * * *

And then there followed a day of the deepest Sontag mourning for all Berlin. Henriette Sontag took farewell of the Königstadt in "Cinderella," on the 29th of May, 1826. Although it was an absence only of a few months, it was, nevertheless, a bitter parting hour. If the old and young Sontag guards had been raging in jubilant raptures till now, they now raged in parting woe.

How many dozens of times Henriette was called before the lamps on that evening! What an amount of sighing! What tears! How many cartloads of flowers! How many bottles of Eau de Cologne! How many hundreds of sonnets were poured out over her! Who could think of figures on that sad, tearful evening in May? Only Karol von Holtei, who, in spite of his little love-defeat by his English lordship,

was still burning and glowing at the head of the young Sontag guards. Holtei himself afterwards related that on that evening he allowed no fewer than six printed farewell sonnets, addressed to the beloved Henriette, to flutter down from the high Olympus upon the divine one. Among the poems was one by Friederich Förster, with a threat to the French: "If you should try to keep this nightingale for Paris, then we must show you that we can again fetch back our Victoria[1] from the Seine." The parting singer was moved to tears, and sobbed, "I do not deserve so much love and goodwill."

Then, when after the performance she appeared at the door of the theatre, she found the whole of the large square filled with a surging, humming multitude, closely packed. These were the thousands who had not found room in the theatre. She was received with thundering cheers.

Although it was only a hundred yards to her apartments in the Kaiser von Russland, situated on the other side of the Alexanderplatz, she nevertheless wisely entered her famous red carriage, the state carriage of the livery-stable keeper Gentz, of Unter den Linden, in order not to be crushed by love and admiration. The way to her hotel was strewn with flowers. The red Sontag carriage was known all over Berlin at that time. Whenever it came in sight anywhere, at once ladies and gentlemen, master and apprentice, boots and cook, rushed to the spot in order to form respectfully a passage for the glorious one, and, if pos-

[1] Alluding to a statue of the Goddess of Victory, which the French had stolen during the wars and carried to Paris, whence it was carried back again to Berlin by Blucher.

sible, to see her; perhaps even to receive a thankful look from her forget-me-not eyes. And what a demand there was for the red carriage—for those days and hours when Henriette did not require it. Every one wished to revel on the same cushions—dream in the same red corner that had been consecrated by Sontag. In order to supply the demand, Herr Gentz had a second red carriage built; but Berlin could not be deceived long, and the new red one was regarded with distrust. And when, after her return from Paris, Henriette selected a coach of the green colour of hope from the store of Herr Gentz, the red one soon went quite out of fashion.

So in this red carriage Henriette Sontag made, under the thousand-voiced *vivats* of the multitude, her triumphal procession to her apartments on that sad evening in May, 1826. In front there marched a music band. There was a really dangerous crush about the red carriage; it could only proceed step by step. In front, at the sides, and behind it, the old and young guards, laden with flowers, formed the escort of honour. They were permitted to accompany their idol into her festively illuminated and flower-decked dwelling, to spend the last evening in her sweet society. Outside in the square the excited multitude continued to sway to and fro till well on into the night, listening to the serenade by torchlight of several military bands, and never tired of crying, "*Vivat! vivat!*" till the sweet one appeared with one or other of her chosen guards upon the balcony, and waved her thanks with her handkerchief. Then arose the thousand-voiced cry, "Come back! come back!" And she joyfully nodded affirmation.

Next morning, the most faithful of her guards gave the parting singer a festive escort in carriages to Potsdam, where they assisted at a brilliant concert in the town theatre of that place, in which Henriette took leave of the court, too. All the tickets had long been bought up by Berliners, and the king also had driven expressly to Potsdam for the purpose. He came to the stage to bid a hearty farewell to his dear nightingale, and to wish her god-speed and good luck in Paris. At the same time the king said, "Been much fêted last night—good Berliners made great noise in the theatre, and also under your windows—hardly been able to go to sleep—must have bothered you at last—at least, I can't endure the fuss—don't like it."

Henriette answered with her most charming smile, most beaming glance, and most child-like tone, "Ah, your Majesty, that is nothing novel for you; but when such a thing happens for the first time to a poor singer, she does feel very happy, I assure you."

And the good king went away more charmed than ever.

Henriette continued her journey to Paris under the chaperonage of her theatre-mother and lady companion, Baroness von Montenglaut, who had formerly figured as reciter and authoress.

After the stormy parting, another, if possible still more painful, woe befell the faithful Sontag guards in Berlin. The anxious question was asked louder and louder, "What if our goddess should perhaps not succeed in that hard-to-please, whimsical Paris? What if they even prepared a *fiasco* for her, in revenge for *la Belle Alliance?* That would be terrible, awful!"

And in the newspapers some malicious, fault-finding

voices, Saphir in his *Schnellpost* leading, came out boldly and ever more boldly, prophesying, "Henriette Sontag will make a terrible *fiasco* in Paris beside artistes like Pasta and Malibran. This pretty little songstress in the small Italian *genre*," they said, "wanted deep-felt tragic and genuine passion to carry the French away with her. Her singing lacked the genuine Italian *portamento di voce;* she even wanted the perfect quaver. With the little taste she possesses, she wont get on in Paris; there they demand poesy, fragrance, warmth of tone, and execution, and, beyond mere singing, a hot beating, feeling heart. Nous verrons."

The old and young guards were furious, and raised a hue and cry, tore their locks and wigs, but gradually went about more humble-mouthed and crestfallen; awaiting, full of fear and trembling, the first news about the first appearance of the beloved Henriette.

But when, eventually, the news arrived, "We have gained a brilliant victory; Henriette has taken Paris by storm," then there was no end to the exultation. The first news of the victory of Waterloo could not have been greeted with more enthusiasm in Berlin. The most passionate Sontag rivals sank with emotion into one another's arms, and then walked on beaming with joy to announce the great tidings in all the cafés, wine saloons, and clubs.

One news of victory followed the other in quick succession. Cherubini, Rossini, Boildieu, Paer, and Auber, all combined in dragging Henriette's triumphal chariot.

After one of her most brilliant successes in the great opera, suddenly a stentorian voice in the pit was heard to say, "Il faut déclarer la guerre au roi de Prusse."

—"Comment cela?"—"Pourquoi?"—"La guerre."—"Revanche!"—"Quoi?" The house was in the greatest excitement, till the same powerful voice continued —

"Oui, oui, Messieurs, la guerre! Mais non à conquérir le Rhin, mais pour conquérir Mademoiselle Sontag!"

This evoked an indescribable enthusiasm.

Henriette even obtained the honour, rare upon the Paris stage, of having handed to her, as the Queen of Song, in token of the gratitude and homage of musical Paris, *la couronne*—a crown of flowers which outweighs a thousand German wreaths of individual devotees.

When Henriette returned to Germany in the autumn she had become a celebrity of the world. Her journey was a triumphal progress. In remembrance of the olden time, when she lived with her grandmother in Mainz, as a poor child of comedians, and whence, with her little sister Nina, she had made the long journey to Prague in the wretched mail-coach, she sang German again for the first time on the Maine, and then she hastened to Weimar, to sing to Goethe. And Goethe sang to her in return.

Goethe writes to Zelter, dated 9th of September, 1826 —

"That Mdlle. Sontag has now also passed us, dispensing melody and music, makes at any rate an epoch. To be sure, every one says that one ought to hear her often, and hundreds would gladly sit again in the Königstadt theatre to-day and all day, and I among them. For, properly speaking, one ought to conceive and comprehend her first as an individual, recognize her as an element of the time, assimilate one's self with

her, accustom one's self to her, then she must needs remain a sweet, agreeable enjoyment. But heard thus, *ex tempore*, her talent has more confused than comforted me. The good that passes by without returning leaves behind it an impression which may be compared to a vacuum—is felt like a want."

In Berlin the beloved Sontag was received in triumph by her old and young guards, who had gone out in carriages and on horseback to meet her outside the city; and on her first reappearance in the Königstadt theatre on the 11th of September, 1826, she was welcomed with shouts of joy, flowers, and poems; but —oh, outrage—there mingled with it also some shrill whistling, because it had become known that Henriette had accepted a three years' engagement at the Italian opera in Paris, and because she had stayed a few days beyond her leave of absence.

Now there began a dreadful noise in the house, as if the people were about to pull it down. It came to a grand hand-to-hand fight between those who clapped their hands and those who whistled. In vain the terrified king, who had hurried his home journey from Teplitz, in order not to be absent on this day of honour to his favourite, sent twice his adjutant to the scene of the fight to restore order, till the police arrested the shrillest whistlers. The whole performance remained one of the greatest excitement.

But then the Sontag fever continued to rage in its old enrapturing glow, if possible more violent than before. Also by the court Henriette was distinguished in every way. The king not only conversed with her at the court concerts, and during the little familiar dinners which Timm gave to the songstress, he met

her also in the palace of the Princess Liegnitz. Thus Varnhagen makes the following entry in his diary, on the 4th of October, 1826:—"Mdlle. Sontag and Mdme. Lemière-Desargus are daily in the society of Princess Leignitz; the former instructs her in playing the pianoforte, the latter gives her lessons in dancing, French conversation, and in various forms of deportment."

In the summer of 1827 it was said in Berlin everywhere that Sontag would accompany his Majesty to Teplitz on his special invitation, but this joint journey did not take place, because too many comments had been made on it beforehand.

When, about the same time, Sontag's favourite parrot made his escape, the king sent her a new one through Prince Wittgenstein with the jocular words, that his Majesty had selected his most beautiful and cleverest bird even at the risk of making Princess Liegnitz jealous.

Such Sontag anecdotes were then busily carried to and fro for days and weeks, and listened to with never-tiring interest.

Nay, the heat of the Sontag fever in Berlin became more and more wild and irregular. Only some comparatively self-possessed people shook their heads at it apprehensively, and tried in every way to cool down the unnatural glow, among them, more especially, Ludwig Rellstab in his criticisms in the *Vossische Zeitung*. The jubilee year of song, 1827, with the brilliant performances of Angelica Catalani and Nannette Schechner (whom Rellstab placed much above Sontag) furnished him with welcome opportunities. Thus he writes about the Catalani, and her execution of the famous and very difficult variations

by Rode, that were originally composed for the violin, and which Mara had been the first to venture on singing,—

"Mdlle. Sontag also has made a great name for herself by it. In comparing the two performances, our opinion is that, with a voice of facile flexibility like that of Mdlle. Sontag, she may well surpass her rival in certain small respects of precision; but that, on the other hand, in the delivery of the air, as well as in a general daring fluency, Mdlle. Catalani carried off the palm by a long way; not to mention the conscientious simplicity with which the latter songstress devotes herself to whatever may be her immediate task, so that even songs which in themselves would hardly please an elevated taste, acquire with her a naturalness which gives them a decided right to exist, whilst with other singers they obtain rarely more than mere sufferance. The relative position of the two singers would thus be about that of a copy *en miniature* compared with an original painting in its natural dimensions."

On the 5th of November, Henriette sang for her benefit the part of "Aménaide" in "Tancred." On this occasion the king presented her with a gift of 400 Friedrichs-d'or and two gold salvers full of trinkets, Princess Liegnitz sent her a gold chain, and the crown princess kissed her tenderly in public after her last performance at court.

The charming enchantress had bewitched everybody.

Shortly before her departure she received from the king an autograph farewell billet, and a letter of recommendation to the Queen of the Netherlands, a sister of his Majesty.

On her new triumphal journey to Paris Henriette sang once more in Goethe's house at Weimar, November 11th, 1827, and then publicly in his native town of Frankfort on the Maine, where the otherwise so morose pessimist, half-deaf Börne was inspired to write his famous Sontag apotheosis, though previously he had been greatly enraged against her and the whole Sontag frenzy everywhere. He writes as follows,—

"My mind was full of the most indignant things, all of which I was going to publish. But, since I have heard and seen the enchantress myself she has bewitched me also like the rest. Now I wish to praise her, but who will furnish me with the words? One might put a prize of 100 ducats on the invention of an adjective that has not been used for Sontag and none would win the prize. She has been called 'the indescribable, the heavenly, the incomparable, the divine, the universally admired, the matchless, the adorable, the adored, the delicate pearl, the dear Henriette, sweetest of maidens, darling little girl, the heroine of song, divine child, the champion of melody, the pride of Germany, the pearl of opera.' I approve of all these epithets with all my heart. To praise our singer let me speak of the frenzy which she has caused here; for such universal intoxication, well, if it does no credit to the toper, it does at least to the wine. Henriette Sontag might, with a slight alteration, say like Cæsar, '*Veni, vidi, vici!*' Victory went before her, and the fight was merely a game for the glorification of the victory. The landlord of the hotel in which Fräulein Sontag had lived for a fortnight, on her departure refused to accept any payment, and in

acting so he raised and rejuvenated the old 'Römische Kaiser' into a Prytaneum in which illustrious Germans of the Fatherland are entertained. Visitors flocked up in great numbers from long distances,—even from Cologne and Hanover the strangers came pouring in."

It was just as it used to be at the Olympian games. An Englishman who could not obtain a place in a private box, wanted to rent the whole pit for himself, and, when it was pointed out to him that such could hardly be done with propriety, he seemed very much surprised at the continental *pruderie*. A young man tramped the eight leagues from Wiesbaden to Frankfort, just arrived when the doors were opened, succeeded in gaining a seat by storm, was good-natured enough to give it up to a lady who felt faint, stood on his feet, then fainted before the performance began, and as there was no room for a swooning man comfortably to fall in, was shoved from hand to hand, standing and lifeless, out at the door, and only recovered after the curtain had fallen for the last time, and returned that same night on foot to Wiesbaden. A citizen of this town was so much exhausted owing to the crowded and stifling state of the theatre that he had to go home, and died the same evening. There was also talk of some accidents and fits, and of people who had to keep their beds for several days. During these days the *Advertizer* was crammed full of advertisements of lost chains, rings, bracelets, veils, and other things which women lost in a crowd.

"Mdme. Catalani is said to have criticized her thus, "Elle est unique dans son genre, mais son genre est petit!" But all who ever heard her as "Desde-

mona" in Rossini's "Otello" will find this criticism very unjust. One forgot entirely the trashy libretto of Rossini's "Otello;" one saw and heard only Shakespeare's "Desdemona." She was as worthy of admiration in the simple song that touches the heart, as in the fancy *bravura* that only dallies with the ear. Old men were seen to weep; such an effect mere mannerism cannot produce, be it ever so incomparable and unheard of. Her modest tones, her wonderful intricacies, quavers, volées, and cadences resemble the pleasant childlike ornamentation of a Gothic edifice, which serves to mitigate the severity of the lofty pillars and arches, and to couple the delight of heaven with the delight of earth, but not to despoil and degrade that severity. The enthusiasm which Henriette Sontag kindled as "Desdemona" was like a Greek fire that is unquenchable.

I feel giddy! I have seen Germans intoxicated, not with wine, but with enthusiasm.

Yea, the whole world lay in a Sontag fever. Who could therefore find fault with the hot-blooded students of Göttingen, that they not only unyoked the post-horses of the mail-coach in which the *diva* rode, and yoked themselves to it, and thus drew the goddess into their seat of the muses on the Leine in triumph, but, moreover, in the intoxication of their enthusiasm even plunged the royal Hanoverian mail-coach into the Leine, so that no unworthy mortal should, by riding in it, ever desecrate this rumbling box thus consecrated by the divine Henriette?

I am silent regarding the new triumphs which *la diva* achieved in Paris in the grand opera and in society. Here she made the acquaintance of the

Sardinian ambassador at the Hague, Count Rossi, who, in the most extravagant way, laid his homage at her feet. Thus the count awaited her once with his carriage after the opera, he himself, in the livery of a coachman, opened the carriage-door for her, and drove her home. Such homage Henriette could not resist. Count Rossi became first favourite among her Paris guardsmen.

In the spring of 1828 the sun, Henriette Sontag, rose for the first time on the mists of England; beaming, darkening all other suns, worshipped like the heavenly constellation of the sun-worshippers! For not merely as singer—but also in English society, which, as a rule, is so rigidly exclusive, and which dares to separate itself in the chamber concerts by a silken cord from the acting and paid artistes, even such as Pasta, Malibran, Schröder-Devrient—even in this society Henriette Sontag occupied an exclusive position. The French ambassador, Prince Polignac, introduced her at the house of the Duke of Devonshire, who gave in her honour a brilliant ball. An eye-witness writes thus about it to Goethe—

"Fräulein Sontag danced with especial grace. The most fashionable world crowded around her, anxious to hear a few words from her lips. This is a distinction without example in London."

Nay, more still, the Duke of Devonshire—the same who once during one of his musical *soirées* patted the celebrated French singer, Lafont, on the shoulder, in the midst of an air he was singing, with these words, "C'est assez, mon cher!"—and Prince Pückler-Muskau, who was travelling in England at the time, laid, almost simultaneously, their hearts and respec-

tive coronets, of duke and prince, at the feet of the celebrated singer; but Henriette did not pick them up. She considered herself bound to Count Rossi.

In the London diary of Moscheles we read the following with reference to this sojourn of Sontag in England —

"From the day of her arrival, the 3rd of April, she was the cause of endless pleasant and sweet enjoyment. The charming young lady, independently of her talent, was most seductive and fascinating in her appearance. Free from presumption or caprice she came and went everywhere. Nay, when she is seated at our own domestic table, we entirely forget that London looks forward to her *début* with intense interest. To-day, in the great rehearsal of 'Barbiere,' she enraptured every one in her part of 'Rosina.' When she appeared on the balcony her lovely appearance was greeted with applause; when she entered the stage with her 'Una voce poco fa,' her voice and singing enthralled everybody. Never did a shadow fall upon any of her London performances. The throng in the stalls of the opera-house (where the ticket costs *only* a guinea) was so great that gentlemen arrived at their seats without their coat-tails; ladies without their head-dress. I could not tell which of her representations I considered the most successful; for her singing is always enchanting, and although I am conscious of the absence of the greater dramatic effects, still the naturalness and sweetness of her play and appearance during the performance occupy one's attention too much to allow one to miss anything. Even when she sings her variations upon the Schweizerbue, it never occurs to me, 'How does she

manage to gurgle thus?' For her performance is perfect in its way.

"At the grand dinner which Prince Esterhazy gave in honour of Mdlle. Sontag there were present Prince and Princess Polignac, Baron Bülow, Count Redern, Lord Hertford, and Lord and Lady Ellenborough. Mdlle. Sontag sang in the most enchanting manner at night. That the Duke of Devonshire soon afterwards invited Fräulein Sontag to his ball, and even danced with her, caused great sensation at that time. The charming young lady wore that evening a very transparent dress of white crape, to which a trimming of genuine gold braiding lent a classical appearance; her sweet appearance was heightened still more by the handsome gold ornaments she wore in her hair, and around her finely modelled neck and perfect arms and hands.

"Once we had the good fortune to see our sweet celebrated countrywoman among us in a somewhat numerous company; she was enchanting, worthy of love; her ways, her singing, everything called forth admiration. Walter Scott, who happened to be in London at the time, had paid us a visit; he was delighted to meet Sontag, and she, who was just about to appear in the 'Donna del Lago,' considered herself very fortunate to make the acquaintance of the youthful old man. He was all ear and eyes when she asked him about her costume as a Highland lass. He described to her every fold of the plaid with that minuteness peculiar to him. I may mention besides that 'Jettel' had among us two former admirers; the one was Clementi, not less enraptured than Scott. He flourished with the fresh-

ness of youth. But now you should have seen how the two hoary old men, Scott and Clementi, were delighted with one another, shook hands, and in spite of each other's courting of and admiration for Sontag showed no mutual jealousy."

On the 24th of July "the star of the season" returned to Paris.

From thence dismal news suddenly reached Berlin. "Our Henriette, who accidentally put her foot on a cherry-stone in her drawing-room, slipped and has hurt her knee dangerously. She is not allowed to appear on the stage, or go into society. Oh, the terrible misfortune! the dear angel!"

In feverish excitement, disconcerted, and inconsolable, the old and young Sontag guards ran about in Berlin, and wherever two met the first question was, "How is she doing?" "No good news arrived from Paris yet?" "Do you not know any particulars of our beloved sufferer?" Sighs and sad shakes of the head were the answer.

The Justizrath Ludolf, quickly resolved, ordered post-horses, left law-suits and clients behind him, and drove to Paris day and night, to inquire after the beloved. He found Henriette surrounded by sympathising friends and admirers, more blooming than ever, resting upon the sofa. There was not the least danger in her case; only she was not yet permitted to rise. Count Rossi devoted to her his tenderest care.—The naughty cherry-stone!

Nevertheless Ludolf returned from his sick-visit in remarkably bad humour. He had heard a certain rumour in Paris; and then in Berlin, too, people excitedly whispered to one another—"Faithless Hen-

riette has concluded a clandestine marriage with the Sardinian ambassador at the Hague! But in the meantime she will remain on the stage; she will also continue to go by her maiden name, for Count Rossi has no private fortune, and his relations, and likewise the King of Sardinia, are opposed to this union with a singer." In the latter part of 1829 I met Henriette Sontag and also Count Rossi in Paris, of which more in a later part of my memoirs.

In the spring of 1830 "Mdlle. Sontag" appeared on her last concert-harvest in Germany—also before the Berliners. She did not intend ever to appear on the stage again, because that was not considered becoming for her Excellency the ambassadress Countess Rossi. And everybody by this time knew in Berlin—in Germany—nay, throughout the world, that "Mdlle. Sontag" only existed for the newspaper advertisements and concert programmes. The general expectation was all the greater, as people were curious to know how her Excellency the countess would look and behave as Mdlle. Henriette Sontag. The attendance at her concerts was, if possible, greater than ever.

This is proved by the criticisms of Ludwig Rellstab, who had, long ago, overcome his rancour against the Berlin-Sontag mania and its author, and had more and more surrendered himself to the sweet enchantress. Thus he writes about Henriette's first concert in Berlin on the 9th of March :—

"Rarely indeed have we attended a concert with more intense expectations, and with sentiments which interfere more with an unbiassed criticism, than that in which Mdlle. Sontag sang, the day before yesterday,

for the first time since her return from Paris. The applause was of the warmest kind."

At the desire of the King, and upon the urgent entreaties of her admirers, Countess Rossi was induced to appear as Mdlle. Sontag sixteen times more on the stage of the opera-house. First as Desdemona. Rellstab writes as follows about it:—

"A splendid, nay stormy, reception on the first appearance of the artiste, proved to her that her excellent dramatic performances would be received with the former delight, and the old confidence. The issue was in accordance with our expectations. . . Lofty, and softly overshadowed by a most touching expression of sadness, the outward appearance of the artiste, her attitude, performance, and movements were quite in harmony with the character. In the most passionate moments she preserved dignity and grace. The volubility of her voice is an accomplishment of the songstress already too universally recognized to need comment. Less universally appreciated in her is that higher virtuosity with which she manages to shade whole musical periods, to round them, and often to heighten them to quite enrapturing force, gradually rising even to the highest pitch of effect, as, for instance, in the third act, through her plastic and incomparably beautiful execution of the romance."

Zelter admires her beautiful dumb-play in this part, her natural voluble manner of singing, and remarks that, although varying at each performance, she nevertheless always remained Desdemona, and further reports to Goethe thus—

"If her voice is not the most beautiful I have

known, at least it is pure, with heart, without phlegm, and therefore so obedient to her ways and will that it always does the right thing. Also her mouth is not perhaps the most beautiful; still one hears no tongue; she speaks so clearly with her lips that one does not need words. In short, everything about her, from head to foot, even her dress is song."

Zelter only regrets "that she is always surrounded by swarms of old, grey, silly fellows who make her presents."

And then came the mournful evening of the 22nd of May, 1830, on which Henriette Sontag took leave for ever of the German stage as Rossini's "Semiramide." As I had left Berlin a year before, and therefore cannot give an account of this tearful event from personal observation, I quote in extract Rellstab's critical notice:—

"The third representation of the opera 'Semiramide' was the last in which Mdlle. Sontag (who, by this time, has left our town) appeared. The greater tension and elevation which every solemn movement gives to our strength seemed also to produce its effect on the rich talent of our artist, and to animate her to an unwonted performance, accustomed though we are to her always remarkable representations. Her whole conception and execution of the part resembles a beautiful stream with luxuriant banks, which from its source to its mouth discloses perpetually new charms to our eyes. A loud, continuous applause, or that higher approval which announces itself in anxious expectation in our breast, that dominates all listeners, and produces the profoundest silence, testified with what power art pene-

trated every heart. One looked forward with a kind of fear to the conclusion, when this stirring singing will perhaps cease for ever, and the fair performer disappear from the scene of her mighty activity—to return no more. The curtain fell. All seemed desirous to show her once more the entire breadth of the enthusiasm which her talent had kindled. The applause that shook the house was indescribable, intermingled with the vociferous calling of her name. The curtain rose again. She stood before us; a shower of flowers and poems rained down upon her. Only after a long pause she addressed to the audience a few words of thanks, from which we fondly drew the hope that it might not be the last time that the artiste would appear before us. She was about to withdraw when Herr Bader appeared with a wreath in his hand, and, in the name of the Muse of Song, addressed a few words to her, whilst, at the same time, from the other side there entered Mdlle. Wolff, who with significant emphasis also offered to her the homage of the Muses who protect histrionic art. The whole of the vast assembly was bound to share this acknowledgment, as well as the wishes and expressions of homage, contained in the various poetical effusions showered down upon her."

The king sent the charming actress another 400 Friedrichs-d'or for his ticket.

In those May-days Henriette appeared also in Berlin, for the first time, at a ball in high life, namely at the Russian ambassador's, Count Alopeus. The intendant, Count Redern, was the first bold and gallant cavalier who engaged the songstress to dance.

Eighteen years later Rellstab added to his last Sontag criticism —

"Indeed, the performance above mentioned was that with which this most charming and graceful artiste concluded her dramatic career. She undertook one more triumphal tour through Europe, but only appeared at concerts, renouncing the stage for ever. Her transition to a very different sphere of life necessarily withdrew her from art. The side to which the balance of her life inclined has much to recommend it; still, fame lay in the other scale, and the name of Henriette Sontag will never be effaced from the annals of art."

Two years later, Rellstab lived to see the Countess Rossi return to the stage as Madame Sontag.

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It was not till after Mdlle. Sontag's great concert tour in 1830, which brought her large sums of money —for example, in Hamburg alone she netted in three evenings 13,202 marks[1]—that Count Rossi, the Sardinian ambassador at the Hague, made public his marriage with Henriette, who had previously been ennobled by the good King Friedrich Wilhelm III. Both, however, seemed to consider it advisable to leave the Hague soon afterwards, and, in consequence, Count Rossi obtained his removal to Frankfort on the Main, as ambassador to the German confederation. Here Countess Rossi became the centre of society. She charmed everybody by her beauty, amiability, grace, and cheerfulness; by her singing, and her kindness of heart. Readily she took a part even in the most amateurish of dilettanti concerts. Once,

[1] One Hamburg mark equvialent to 1*s.* 3*d.*

when during such a musical soirée, the Baroness Rothschild was to sing a solo and stuck in her part, Countess Rossi, who stood behind her, helpfully at once took up the song, and hidden by her music, sang the part successfully to an end. Of course, the good people of Frankfort were wondering very much how the Baroness Rothschild had so suddenly come by these nightingale tones.

The Countess Rossi also, repeatedly, took an active part in charity concerts in the church of St. Catherine; and once, when she was told that a poor invalid had expressed an ardent wish to hear her sing before she died, Henriette did not disdain to visit the sick-room, and gladden the sufferer by her singing.

Soon afterwards Count Rossi was transferred as ambassador to the court of St. Petersburg, at the special request of Czar Nicholas, who was a great admirer of Madame la Comtesse de Rossi—gnol, and there Henriette was worshipped amongst the most celebrated stars of the court. She was on the most intimate terms with the Imperial family, and almost nightly sang with the young grand-dukes duets and songs, such as the Czar liked. Nay, the rigid, ungenial autocrat of all the Russias was sometimes softened and moved by these heavenly tones, to such a degree that he himself sang sacred trios with his lovely and favourite daughter Alexandra, who was destined to so early a death, and Countess Rossi. At the request of the Czar, Madame Rossi—gnol appeared several times before the court, in the characters of the "Sonnambula" and "Lucia." When King Charles Albert of Sardinia heard of this, he expressed his disapproval of these unbecoming theatrical re-

suscitations of the spouse of his ambassador, and, in a very decided way, forbade Count Rossi the semi-public comedy-playing of his wife. This was followed by a diplomatic exchange of very sharp notes between the courts of St. Petersburg and Turin, Czar Nicholas declaring very emphatically, that all her Excellency the Ambassadress of Sardinia was doing was by his request, and must not be called unbecoming. But it was only when the Czar of all the Russias threatened to break off all relations with Turin, if the countess-ambassadress should in any way be thwarted in her theatrical inclinations, that the King of Sardinia gave way. But the latter never forgave Countess Rossi this diplomatic defeat.

Her Excellency the ambassadress sang also before the general public of St. Petersburg in a concert of Madame Czegka's, her beloved teacher at the conservatoire of Prague. The grateful heart of Henriette had invited this excellent singing-mistress from Vienna to St. Petersburg, and procured for her a distinguished post in the new theatrical academy, as well as many private pupils in the wealthiest houses. Madame Czegka was also appointed singing-mistress to the Grand Duchesses Olga (the present Queen of Würtemburg), Alexandra, and the two daughters of Grand-Duke Michael. She who, as singing-mistress at the Leipzig theatre, under Hofrath Kustner's management, received a salary of only 600 thalers, now enjoyed an annual income of 20,000 roubles [1] in St. Petersburg. And a concert which Countess Rossi gave, in grateful remembrance of her early years in Prague for her

[1] A rouble is equivalent to 3*s*. 2½*d*.

maternal friend, brought the latter a net gain of 14,000 roubles. Besides, her Excellency observed the same reverential conduct towards her old teacher as in those days, and would not permit Madame Czegka to call her otherwise than "Jettel" and "thou."

One day, after this only appearance of Henriette in public, an old music-enthusiast, an Armenian, called on her in St. Petersburg, and told her his story, that he had accomplished the long journey from Charkow to the city of the Czars, in order to hear her sing, but had been unable to obtain a ticket. Now he was reluctant to return home without having at least seen the wondrous nightingale.

Immediately Henriette went to her "grand," and sang Desdemona's song of the willow, moving the enthusiast to sweet tears, and being herself charmed even to weeping that she had been able to do so.

I know it from her mother, who was then living in Dresden with her younger son Karl, and with whom I kept up a friendly intercourse, that Henriette provided in the most loving way for her mother and brother—for poor Nina had before this entered a convent. In vain had her politic mother tried everything in her power to obtain for Nina the brilliant position on the stage which had been vacated by Henriette. How sadly this had failed in Berlin in "La Dame Blanche" we have seen already. Three years later Nina suffered a still severer defeat in London as "Zerlina." It was only to please her mother that the poor victim encountered all these renewed and joyless experiments. Her quiet, unselfish heart desired nothing of life beyond peace and quiet. So she told me, as late as the summer of 1840, when

I saw her for the last time in Dresden; and as she spoke a deep religious enthusiasm shone from her eyes. Soon afterwards she entered the convent of the Carmelites at Prague, as novice. These Carmelite nuns are subjected to the severest rules; they wear next the skin, day and night, a coarse hair-cloth garment and sleep in their coffins, on straw. They are only permitted to eat fish and pulses, and even that humble food they are often in want of; and then the starving wretches chime their little tocsin, that humane hearts may take pity on them. Their special saint is "Maria electa," whose incorruptible body has been kept in the cloister for centuries; it moves its hands and arms—by a mechanical contrivance, the profane world pretends—the nuns say, by a miracle.

The delicate frame of poor Nina could not stand this severe discipline. The prioress herself procured her transfer to another and less rigid order. Thus Nina Sontag took the veil in the cloister of Marienthal near Görlitz, following the example of our beautiful and talented colleague at the Königstadt theatre, Maria Hérold, who had lived since 1833 as nun in the cloister of St. Mariastern, in Bautzen, in Saxon Lusatia.

How I, together with Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, saw Countess Rossi again in the Dresden theatre, during the representation of the "Huguenots," I have already related.

Four years later I met Henriette for the last time in Dresden, at her mother's house. She was amiable and cordial, as in the olden time when we were colleagues, and would not listen to the title of Countess, or Excellency, between us. She recalled

with special fondness the gay time we had spent together in Berlin, where we had played, sung, and danced together, and particularly that merry Christmas night in Ludolf's house—the house which had meanwhile come to so sad a fall. She did not know either where or when our unfortunate friend Ludolf had ended his career; but she reproached herself that, in her youthful thoughtlessness, she had accepted from him so many sacrifices, never dreaming that she, too, was thus contributing to his ruin.

Then we talked of St. Petersburg, where I too had lived for three years. But in the gayest conversation, Henriette repeatedly showed traces of sadness. Her mother soon afterwards confided to me that Count Rossi was unable to maintain himself any longer as ambassador in the costly Russian capital, that he possessed no private fortune, and that Henriette's savings had by this time been completely consumed. The count had applied for a removal to the same post in Berlin, where living was less expensive. But even there they would be unable to keep up their position with his income as ambassador alone. Henriette, therefore, was seriously thinking of re-entering the stage. Count Rossi had already taken preliminary steps at the court of Turin with that view.

But King Charles Albert roundly refused his consent; his ambassador's wife was not to sing for money. But he gave Count Rossi the confidential advice that he might, apparently owing to conjugal differences, separate from his wife; nobody could then hinder her from appearing again on the stage as Henriette Sontag. After the attainment of the golden end the couple might come to terms again before the world.

But Count Rossi and Henriette loved each other, and their children, too sincerely to think of adopting so unworthy an expedient. So they tried to make the count's income as ambassador alone meet their expenses. It is well known that Countess Rossi became again the enchanting favourite of the new court of Friedrich Wilhelm IV. and of the fashionable world, just as Henriette Sontag had once been the *enfant gâté* of the old court of Friedrich Wilhelm III. and of the whole town. With what mixed feelings must the Countess Rossi have entered again those saloons at court in which Henriette Sontag, as "chamber singer to his Majesty," had enraptured the fashionable world? Her form I remember quite vividly now—the tender, sweet maiden in a dress of white silk, wearing blue asters in her fair locks, bright joyfulness beaming in her forget-me-not eyes, as she stood beside me at the entrance of the ball-room after the musical representation in the palace, while we whispered to each other our remarks about dancing royalty.

From the notice of an anonymous contemporary, which was printed in 1842, I gather, however, that even then, when I saw Henriette in Dresden for the last time, the possibility of her return to the stage was publicly spoken of. I quote the following,—

"Whether the reports current, in 1841, that she would appear on the stage again, owing to deranged finances, are well founded, whether, as it is said, her visit to Vienna at the beginning of 1842 has anything to do with it, a near future will reveal. It would, at any rate, be a pity if she who, when in the bloom of personal attractions, and in the zenith of her

splendour, voluntarily withdrew from the wondering world, should, at the wane of that splendour, and with decreasing powers, have to come before the public again."

These reports were persistently renewed during the following years. Thus I read at the beginning of July, 1849, in a Frankfort journal,—

"The *Indépendance* learns from the *Observateur*, a paper generally well informed in musical matters, that the report of Countess Rossi being about to fulfil an engagement at the opera is without foundation. The countess would, on the contrary, together with her husband, who has quitted the Piedmontese diplomatic service, take up her residence permanently in Brussels. The paper congratulates the *haute volée* of Belgian society on this new acquisition, since the countess's eminent talent has been left intact by time."

The Frankfort journal continues,—"We give our readers this information, which, however, the *Indépendance* does not vouch for, adding that Countess Rossi, shortly before leaving Berlin, visited the business premises of Herr Gerson, and there made purchase of light coloured silks to the amount of several hundred thalers, which silks she previously carefully tested, as to their light effects, in the Moorish room of the firm. Time will decide whether this testing was meant for Brussels society or the London proscenium."

And the question was decided a few days later in favour of England.

The troublous year 1848 had also shaken the throne of Charles Albert of Sardinia, and the war with Austria had exhausted the finances of the country.

Count Rossi had every reason to be uneasy about his position as ambassor.

His spouse thought more and more seriously of returning to the stage, there to win by her talent for her husband and dearly beloved children a golden future. She had cautiously made inquiries in London, through her devoted friend, Lord Westmoreland, the English ambassador in Berlin, as to what Mr. Lumley, manager of Her Majesty's Theatre, would say to it. Mr. Lumley made as cautious inquiries in Berlin regarding Countess Rossi, her voice, and her personal appearance, and was delighted to hear that the Countess Rossi, during the twenty years that had elapsed since her departure from the London stage, had—oh, miracle!—grown only a very little older in appearance than the enchanting Henriette had been, whether as to voice or figure. On the other hand she possessed an altogether novel charm for old and young England—since a real ambassadress London had never yet seen on the stage.

Thus began a series of most cautious negotiations between the manager and the songstress; first through the mediation of Lord Westmoreland, afterwards through Thalberg, the famous pianist, who was giving concerts in Berlin, 1849.

Early in April, 1849, Thalberg writes to Lumley,—

"Nothing positive has yet been decided, but we may hope for a speedy success. The prospect of having to return to the stage seems greatly to vex the countess; I saw her shed tears at the very mention of it. But the watchword in Piedmont is at present 'economy,' on account of the millions that have to be paid to Austria. Twelve ambassadors

have already been recalled, and her husband will very likely be the next to go. Or, instead of an ambassador, a *chargé d'affaires* might be substituted, and his salary reduced by one half. Under these circumstances the countess feels that the sacrifice she would have to make might become a necessity on account of the future of her children. Her fate will probably be decided in a week or so, when she will immediately write to you in London. I talked to her of the importance of publishing this news at once in England; but she declared on the contrary that these negotiations must for the present remain the greatest secret."

Soon afterwards the Countess Rossi herself writes to Lumley, who had already made her an offer of £6000 for a season's engagement on his stage in London,—

"When Herr Thalberg was here everything seemed to indicate that I should soon be able to accept your offer. However, political events seem to have somewhat consolidated the position of Piedmont since then, and you will understand that in such a moment I must not come to a resolution which only absolute necessity could justify."

Then, on the 4th of May, a letter of the countess contains the following,—

"Since my last communication decisive steps have been taken in Turin, and at the latest on the 15th inst. we must receive a categorical answer. If this should be one favourable to your proposal, you might expect me in London as early as the 25th of May. I am quite sensible of the great difficulty and unpleasantness of your position, and I should be glad

indeed if it were in my power to end this wretched uncertainty. But, no doubt also, you will understand with what difficulties we have to deal, and with what delicacy to act. As soon as I am once more Mademoiselle Sontag, your interest shall be wholly mine: to you I shall devote myself with heart and soul."

But also in the subsequent letters Lumley had to be put off again and again—the last word had not yet been spoken.

It was not until June that Count Rossi definitively lost his post as Sardinian ambassador to the court of Berlin: immediately Henriette signed a contract, on the most favourable terms, for two seasons at Her Majesty's Theatre. But despite her difficult and painful pecuniary situation, she would have evaded this step had she not been assured by her old patron, the Grand-Duke George of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and by Lord Westmoreland, that Mdlle. Henriette Sontag would exist solely for the English opera, but that in the aristocratic English drawing-rooms her Excellency the Countess Rossi would hold the place due to her.

And thus, on the 7th of July, 1849, when the German, French and Belgian journals were still discussing the question whether Countess Rossi had tested those light silks in Gerson's Moorish room to ascertain their light effects for Brussels society, or for the London proscenium, Henriette Sontag stood already on the stage of Her Majesty's Theatre in London, in the character of Donizetti's "Linda di Chamouni," and had been received by the crowded house with a perfect storm of applause.

What feelings must have filled her breast in that trying hour! The thought of the past, when, fully twenty years ago, she last sang before this audience, and how different everything was then! The thought of her aged mother in Dresden, who was anxiously looking for the first news of the success or failure of this reappearance; the thought of her beloved sister Nina, in the gloomy garments of a nun, who, doubtless, at that moment was kneeling down in her quiet, bare cloister-cell, to pray for the success of her beloved sister upon the bright, giddy, sinful boards! The thought of her husband and her dearly beloved children, whose future depended on the issue of this hour!

Also the heart of many an old admirer of young Henriette's of the gay time, twenty years ago, would be beating with anxiety till this lady above forty, the mother of four children, had sung her first note!

But, when this note had sounded through the breathless house, oh, wonder! the twenty years that nip the beauty of so many other fair ones, that dim so many a bright eye, destroy so many a graceful form, and so many a silvery voice, were alike wiped away. Henriette stood again before the Londoners in the old charm of sweet, youthful beauty and gracefulness, and her clear, silvery voice sang its exultant notes and quavers as purely, captivating the ear, and bewitching the heart, as in the old, young days of the year 1829. The miracle was incomprehensible, but it was also indisputable.

After this, Henriette Sontag was overwhelmed with ovations in the theatre, night after night—and Countess Rossi was idolized in the fashionable world.

After "Linda," she sang "Rosina" in the "Barbiere," "Amina" in the "Sonnambula," "Desdemona" in "Otello," "Susanna" in "Figaro," and had no need to fear comparison with the young Swedish Nightingale, Jenny Lind, who had, shortly before, entranced all England. But she did not now venture to play "Donna Anna," or "Lucrezia Borgia." Henriette Sontag always knew herself, and her vocal power, so well that she never sang a part in which she might possibly fail, or which might turn out dangerous for her voice. Thus she never appeared in an opera by Spontini or Meyerbeer. She did afterwards sing "Lucrezia Borgia" *once* more, but immediately put it aside again, finding it no longer suitable for her, till she sang her swan-song in Mexico.

The Countess Rossi's triumphs were hardly inferior to those of Henriette Sontag. She shone, danced, and sang in the saloons of the Duchess of Cambridge, of the Duchesses of Cleveland and Rutland, the Russian ambassadress, Baroness Brunnow, and others; and the most magnificent country-seats in England and Scotland received Count and Countess Rossi as highly honoured guests.

At the end of the year 1849 Mademoiselle Sontag undertook a grand concert-tour through England and Scotland, together with the artistes Thalberg, Calzolari, Lablache, and Piatti. On the route from Glasgow to Aberdeen the railway train stuck in a snow-wreath, and the delicate lady had to struggle along on foot through the terrible snowstorm. Count Rossi wrote to Mr. Lumley regarding it —

"If Madame de Rossi had shown less courage

and energy during these perils, in the dead of night, in the deepest darkness—the snow lay six feet deep, and the storm threw us off our feet when we left the railway carriages—all of us would have been found frozen to death in the compartments the following morning. About midnight every trace of the carriages had disappeared under the snow. If we had been obliged to walk another hundred yards before we found a shelter, we should all have dropped down dead on the way. When we reached the house, Lablache and my man-servant fell down unconscious. Madame de Rossi has been profoundly affected by this dreadful incident. She had to dry her clothes before the fire without taking them off. You may judge how much her voice has suffered in consequence, and how impossible it is for her to sing in concerts at present."

Count and Countess Rossi consequently accepted the invitations of the Dukes of Rutland and Cleveland to Belvoir Castle and Raby Castle respectively, to recruit themselves.

In her second season in the Italian opera Sontag charmed the public in several new parts, such as: "Zerlina" in "Don Juan," "Miranda" in Halévy's "Tempesta," in the "Puritani," in the "Daughter of the Regiment," and in "Semiramide." In the last-named character, which she had selected for her benefit, she pleased least, whereupon she discarded it for ever as unsuitable.

In November, 1850, Countess Rossi faced a Paris audience for the first time as "Sonnambula." Gustav zu Pullitz, who happened to be staying in Paris at the time, but who had to leave the day following,

owing to the mobilization of the Prussian army, writes concerning it in his "Theatrical Reminiscences"—

"The event caused an unusual amount of expectation, and a keen discussion of the hazardous enterprise, although Countess Rossi had proved already in London that she was still the first songstress of the world in her line. This very proof, given in foreign parts, made the Parisians distrustful. The people there want to be makers of their own enthusiasm; nay, more, they arrogantly usurp the pretension that without the Paris stamp of recognition there exists no celebrity at all. We, the German countrymen of the singer, had often had to break a lance on her account, owing to this Parisian incredulity; thus it was natural enough that we all wished to be present at the first performance. But it was impossible to obtain tickets for the opening night of the Italian season, so we had been forced to look forward to the following nights; but I, who was to leave Paris next day, saw every prospect cut off, perhaps for life, of seeing this prodigy of the stage, whose loud ovations had rung in my ears when a child, and who now, like a long-hidden treasure, was raised once more to the light, to be seen, heard, and admired. That made my departure from Paris more trying still."

Through the mediation of bandmaster Karl Eckert —of whom the reader has heard already as a prodigy, and who, at the special request of Countess Rossi, conducted the Italian opera in Paris at the time— Gustav zu Pullitz after all received, at the eleventh hour, a ticket for the opera "Sonnambula," and thus is enabled to report about the bearer of the title-rôle,—

"The celebrated singer appeared on the stage, but not a sign of the applause which her mere name would surely have justified greeted her. Even the best-disposed demanded that she should herself earn her Parisian renown. Nay, a silent predisposition to be dissatisfied was observable. We, the friends of the artiste, sat there in anxious suspense. But after her first appearance, at her first notes, a whisper went through the house, 'Is that really Henriette Sontag, the mother of grown-up children, the songstress who delighted us when on the summit of her fame, twenty years ago?' Indeed, Sontag, despite a slight embonpoint, was so youthful in appearance, and so graceful in her movements, so fresh in the sound of her voice, that the fable suddenly sprang up that she was not the mother, but a daughter Rossi, who was to renew Henriette's fame; and it seemed not improbable. But now the singer displayed that incomparable vocal skill for which there seemed to exist no difficulty, and by it not merely exploded that fable, but also overcame, as by storm, every prejudice, and, as it were, carelessly and smilingly won for herself the applause till now withheld, but which, at the very first finale, broke out tempestuously, and then continued, ever increasing, to the end of the opera. With this the fate of the Italian season was decided, and Henriette Sontag adopted in Paris in all security of splendour.

"There is one thing that has always remained faithful to this wonderful woman during her changeful life, which led her through the indigence of subordinate theatre existence, then through all the transports of the highest successes as an artiste, and through the brilliancy of an elevated social position, namely, an

uninterrupted chain of homage, which, however, she merited not merely by her talent, but by her grace, amiability, and her heart, as humanely kind as it was earnestly art-inspired.

"And yet, in spite of the feverish interest with which I followed the issue of that evening, this 'Somnambulist' could not efface from my mind the impression which another interpreter of that character, Jenny Lind, had left on me of this very part—an impression never to be forgotten. If the latter ranked second to Sontag, so far as the art of singing in the true Italian style, nay, even beauty of voice, were concerned, she nevertheless surpassed her in her peculiar, self-created conception, to which a wonderfully touching sweetness of voice lent an irresistible and never-to-be-forgotten charm.

"A year later I saw Sontag in London as the 'Daughter of the Regiment,' which she sang and played with the frolicsomeness of a girl of fourteen; but it was not before another year had passed that I saw her in Hamburg, in the full display of her vocal and mimic art, executing her part in a manner such as I have never again witnessed on the stage; I refer to her 'Susanna,' in Mozart's 'Figaro.'

"Also in Hamburg the artiste was obliged to fight before she conquered. People were annoyed at having to pay abnormal prices to hear a singer who had completed the fortieth year of her life. Moreover, the Hamburg theatre just at that time had a singer of its own of the *genre* of Sontag, who was justly admired, but whom a by no means inconsiderable party of theatre *habitués* wrongly considered unsurpassable. Well, this party looked upon the

successes of Sontag as a kind of insult and slight to their own favourite, and there was a rumour that a demonstration was to be made at the theatre on the evening when the two songstresses were to appear together in the same play. Everybody knew about it, and well-meaning though tactless people went so far as even to inform Countess Rossi of this, warning her, nay, conjuring her, not to sing in 'Figaro,' as her Hamburg rival was to appear in the character of the page. Henriette Sontag quietly neglected these epistles, and appeared as 'Susanna' on the stage. And now she sang and played around the page, whom she did not lose sight of for a moment, and so completely drew him into her play that it would have been impossible to accord the least applause to 'Cherubino' which would not necessarily have been for 'Susanna' also. Well, it may be imagined that this applause was a perfect storm, but it was accorded to 'Susanna' alone, and never had a more deserved one been bestowed upon an artistic performance."

During the great International Exhibition in London, 1851, Henriette Sontag was once more the adored "Star of the Season." At that time she first sang the so-called "Sontag Polka," specially composed for her, which has since become a national song of England.

In December of the same year she visited her native town, Koblenz, where she received ovations like a queen. She sang in a concert for the benefit of the poor. Hoffmann von Fallersleben, then living in the neighbouring Neuwied, dedicated a sonnet to her, which was sung by a choir of male voices under her window in the Triersche Hof, after the concert.

The very next summer Henriette, who was taking

the waters at Ems, fell into such a delicate state of health that she was unable to go to England.

But once more the affectionate mother gathered herself up to garner a rich golden harvest for her children. In the spring of 1854 she went to America, accompanied by *Kapellmeister* Eckert. In the very midst of her triumphal career, and in the fullest harvest, she fell a victim to the inexorable reaper Death. She died of cholera on the 17th of June, 1854. Her last words to Germany were,—"The applause here is perfectly tropical."

Her last yearnings were thoughts of her husband—her children—her country. What a lonely, sad death, after the richest and most brilliant life!

During her lifetime she had sometimes expressed the wish to be laid one day in the cloister where her sister Nina was a nun, bearing the cloister name of "Juliane."

This, her wish, has been fulfilled. The coffin arrived in Dresden by sea. Frau Charles Maier, the wife of the famous pianoforte virtuoso, who had known Henriette during the time of her greatest fame in St. Petersburg, accidentally stood upon the Elbe bridge, and accompanied the mournful procession to the railway-station. She told me later how this sad death and burial had made her melancholy. The remains of Henriette Sontag passed Dresden almost unnoticed. Her poor mother, now entirely bereaved of her daughters, only said these words, whilst streams of tears were flowing from her eyes: "The Lord gave! The Lord hath taken away! Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

The young Counts Rossi bore the coffin of their mother down into the vault, in the cloister of St. Marienthal; it bears the following inscription,—

"To the best of mothers. To the tenderest of daughters. To the most faithful wife. To the noblest friend. To the greatest singer."

Ten years afterwards Count Rossi died likewise, and Frau Franziska Sontag in April, 1865.

The poor lonely nun Nina Juliane has prayed already more than twice ten years at the coffin of her beloved sister Henriette, has wept and sung pious songs.

May she have found in the cloister that peace which she did not find in the world! A friend of mine, who visited cloister and tomb in 1877, writes, concerning Henriette's resting-place,—

"The sexton raised up a trap-door and descended into a gloomy, damp vault. I had to walk cautiously upon planks which had been loosely laid across rafters, and through which glittered the underground water that defied all efforts to remove it. Henriette's magnificent sarcophagus of bronze bears the arms of the Counts of Rossi in relief, with the motto, 'All for my king and my honour.' Upon the coffin lie a golden laurel wreath, a gift of the old King Ludwig of Bavaria, and a silver one from the Duke of Koburg. Deeply affected, I quitted the gloomy sepulchre, thinking, 'What a solitary grave, after such a joyous life!' Henriette's sister Nina[1] is still living as a nun in the cloister; she is now sixty-seven years of age, but quite weak of intellect."

Yea, poor, poor life of man, how vain thou appearest in the tomb!

[1] Nina Sontag has died since, towards the end of 1879.

END OF VOL. I.

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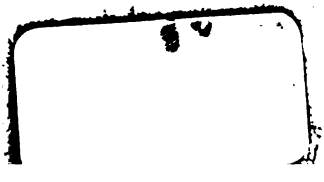
6 14 6